THE saint's CHOICE OF

25c IND.

Radio Thrillers

ARCH OBOLER
NORMAN CORWIN
ELLERY QUEEN
SHERLOCK HOLMES
CRIME DOCTOR
SUSPENSE
CALLING ALL CARS
THE SAINT

Edited by
LESLIE CHARTERIS

CHARTERED COLLECTION

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Between these covers you will find THE UGLIEST MAN IN THE WORLD who had the face of a gargoyle, the soul of a poet, and who was a major attraction in a sideshow.

Turn the pages and meet Cecile. She loved Dougal. She wound up in a ditch. THE MOAT FARM MURDER by Norman Corwin.

One of the most prominent characters today is Ellery Queen. You can pit your wits against this know-it-all in THE ADVENTURE OF THE MURDERED SHIP — which concerns a captured Jap submarine captain, a dead boy, Dorothy Lamour, and Ellery Queen's usual retinue.

SHERLOCK HOLMES, who can examine a flea and tell you the name of the millionaire it bit three weeks ago, opens his deductive powers full blast and blows out the secret of THE DISAPPEARANCE OF LADY FRANCES CARFAX. Aided, of course, by a bewildered Watson.

"Suspense" presents THE NIGHT MAN. He had a strong sense of justice. Stella ran afoul of that sense of justice and learned that "do unto others . . ." is not such a bad rule, after all.

Herein, also, is the CRIME DOCTOR, that omniscient expert in death, art, and the condition of burned flesh, alive or dead. Add to this impressive list the SAINT — that Robin Hood of modern crime who is wolfbane to cops, a wolf to beautiful women, and simply a bane to crooks.

"CALLING ALL CARS. Four prisoners have kidnapped the prison board and escaped from San Quentin. Calling all cars, calling all bombing planes, calling all——"

Quite an array, don't you think?

THE *saint's* CHOICE
OF
RADIO THRILLERS

EDITED BY

Leslie Charteris

saint enterprises inc.
PUBLISHERS HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

A CHARTERED COLLECTION

THE SAINT'S CHOICE of RADIO THRILLERS

Copyright 1946 by
Leslie Charteris

ALL RIGHTS
RESERVED

Manufactured in the United States of America

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the right to print the copyrighted stories in this volume the editor is indebted to the following:

ARCH OBOLER for:

THE UGLIEST MAN IN THE WORLD
(*LIGHTS OUT* Show—March 14, 1941)

NORMAN CORWIN for:

THE MOAT FARM MURDER
(*CBS* Show—July 18, 1944)

ELLERY QUEEN for:

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MURDERED SHIP
(*ELLERY QUEEN* Show—Copyright 1943, The American Mercury, Inc.)

DENIS P S CONAN DOYLE for:

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF LADY CARFAX
(*SHERLOCK HOLMES* Show—February 26, 1945)

LUCILLE FLETCHER for:

THE NIGHT MAN
(*SUSPENSE* Show—October 26, 1944)

MAX MARCIN for:

THE STOLEN REMBRANDT
(*CRIME DOCTOR* Show—June 3, 1945)

WILLIAM N ROBSON for:

THE SAN QUENTIN PRISON BREAK
(*CALLING ALL CARS* Show—January 22, 1935)

LESLIE CHARTERIS for:

THE MIRACLE TEA PARTY
(*SAINT* Show—July 25, 1945)

CONTENTS

THE UGLIEST MAN IN THE WORLD 5
by ARCH OBOLER

THE MOAT FARM MURDER 21
by NORMAN CORWIN

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MURDERED SHIP 37
by ELLERY QUEEN

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF LADY FRANCES CARFAX 51
(from SHERLOCK HOLMES)
by DENIS GREEN

THE NIGHT MAN 67
(from SUSPENSE)
by LUCILLE FLETCHER

THE STOLEN REMBRANDT 81
(from CRIME DOCTOR)
by MAX MARCIN

THE SAN QUENTIN PRISON BREAK 93
(from CALLING ALL CARS)
by WILLIAM N ROBSON

THE MIRACLE TEA PARTY 109
(from THE SAINT)
by LESLIE CHARTERIS

LIGHTS OUT

presents

THE UGLIEST MAN IN THE WORLD

by

Arch Oboler

TO ANY student of radio, Arch Oboler is a "must" for any anthology. But when I approached him on the subject and told him that this was to be a selection of radio thrillers, he was dubious at first.

"I don't want to be typed as a horror man," he said.

I assured him that I would carefully explain to the reader that Arch Oboler was not a horror man. Kindly take note of the explanation.

ARCH OBOLER IS NOT A HORROR MAN.

He is, in fact, one of the most versatile writers and producers in radio.

But he has done some very fine thrillers, and this is one of them.

LC

THE UGLIEST MAN IN THE WORLD

by

ARCH OBOLER

The Characters

PAUL ..... *the ugliest man*
VOICE ..... *his other self*
HIS MOTHER ..... *she hid mirrors*
WOMAN ..... *she loved money*
GIRL ..... *she loved Paul*

Music. A chord. And then a soft melody which grows slowly dissonant.

THE SCENE—*a room in semi-darkness. At a table sits a man; tall, gaunt, his heavy face lit occasionally by a random beam of light reflecting off the polished barrel of a revolver. This is Paul Martin; as the revolver twists in his nervous fingers, the thoughts in his mind twist and turn . . . twist and turn . . . twist and turn . . .*

PAUL: (*Softly at first, becoming gradually louder. "Stream of consciousness" thoughts in monotone*) . . . gun in my hand in my hand in all my life I never had a gun in my hand smooth gun hard gun cold gun in my hand bullet won't be cold warm bullet hot bullet burning hot hot as the blood—no, can't think of that lift the muzzle up and press the trigger trigger cold against my finger cold as death but life is colder—rhythm to that—poet dies with final rhythm poet dies who never wrote a poem—headline for the tabloids—Poet Dies with Final Rhythm.

VOICE: (*As if from a great distance. It has a thin rasping quality*) Ugliest Man in the World a Suicide.

PAUL: (*Firmly—spacing words as if to drive out the other voice*) Poet—Dies—with—Final—Rhythm.

VOICE: (*Somewhat closer, louder*) Ugliest Man in the World a Suicide!

PAUL: (*Louder—with anguish—as if to drown out the Voice*) Poet Dies in Final Rhythm!

VOICE: (*Closer—Shouting*) Ugliest Man in the World a Suicide!

PAUL: Poet Dies in Final Rhythm!

VOICE: Ugliest Man in the World a Suicide!

PAUL: No, no, stop! Stop!

The Voice stops abruptly.

PAUL: (*Low, in agony*) Ugliest Man in the World! All right, I'll think the thing for the last time tear the words around in my head over and over the way they've torn for thirty years! Ugliest Man in the World. Ugliest Man in the World. Ugliest Man in the World! Press the trigger and stop it press the trigger! No, no, I can't! Got to wait! Wait for what? For nothing! Nothing if I press the trigger nothing if I wait! Press the trigger . . . No! . . . (*Pause*) My chance . . . yes my chance to think . . . think it all out clearly for the first time in my life . . . how it started why it's ending *this* way . . . think it all out clearly from the very start . . . then press the trigger—

He remembers the voice of his mother calling to him many years ago—

MOTHER: School today, Paul.

PAUL: There's a start—first day of school—how old was I—nine or ten—she kept me home away from others—I didn't know why until that day she said—

MOTHER: (*There is a note of regret in her voice*) School today, Paul.

PAUL: I said:

BOY: (*Paul as a boy of about ten, a bright-voiced lad*) All right, mother!

PAUL: She took me to school—into a room full of more children than I'd ever seen—I was so happy I wondered why her face was white and set. She said:

MOTHER: (*Nervously*) Miss Edwards, this—this is my son . . . I—I want him in your class. Please—be kind to him.

PAUL: Before the teacher could answer mother hurried out of the room and left me there. The teacher's eyes were on me—small eyes worried eyes, thin mout hopened—turned to the faces lifting below her—

MISS EDWARDS: Your attention, children! I—I want you to meet a new classmate. His name is—uh—

BOY: (*Paul as a boy*) Paul Martin!

PAUL: For a moment not a sound—row on row of children looking up at me staring up at me gaping up at me . . . And then—

A single child's laughter begins far back—one of the school children in the room involuntarily bursting into laughter at the sight of his face.

PAUL: One of them started laughing!

The laughter of another child joins the first—one by one other children join in until the room rings with the derisive shrill laughter of children.

PAUL: (*Dazedly*) Another laughing—another—and another! Laughing laughing. I stood there a little boy looking down at their twisting mouths my ears filled with the sound of them! Making fun of me I knew that but *why?*

The laughter stops suddenly.

VOICE: Why?

CHILD'S VOICE: (*Whispering derisively*) Ugliest boy in the world.

PAUL: (*Low*) Ugliest boy in the world . . . that's why you kept me away from children, Mother, kept me away until you didn't dare to any longer. (*Agonized*) Oh, Mother, Mother, before you let others see my face why didn't you close your hands around my neck, put a knife in my heart, drown me, bury me, put me away where eyes couldn't see me—

We hear Paul as a small boy crying broken-heartedly.

PAUL: But you didn't, so this was my boyhood—tears, tears without end—a boyhood of tears, a boyhood of tears.

The crying of the little boy fades out.

PAUL: Took me out of school—kept me away from all the others—what good was it? I knew I *knew!*

VOICE: (*Whispering*) There wasn't a mirror in the house!

PAUL: Not a mirror—I didn't dare you didn't dare—until that day you died!

We hear the voice of the minister who officiated at his mother's burial.

MINISTER: We have committed your beloved to the keeping of the mother earth which bears us all. Cherish the memory of her words and deeds and character. (*Softly*) Good night, my boy . . .

PAUL: Alone . . . so quiet in the house . . . I sat down . . . so quiet . . .

There is the ticking of a clock, faintly audible at first, growing louder.

PAUL: And then suddenly as if the clock were talking to me—yes, I remember—(*In time to the tick-tock of the clock*) Look—at—your—self, look—at—your—self! Look—at—

The ticking stops.

PAUL: (*Loud*) Yes! Look at myself! That's what I'd do! Never had looked at myself—never had seen what I look like—I hadn't dared,

I hadn't wanted to but now I had to know—had to had to! A mirror—had to find a mirror—surely Mother had kept one mirror somewhere.

We hear him opening drawers and shuffling through miscellaneous objects.

PAUL: Drawer after drawer—a mirror, surely there was a mirror. Mother gone I was alone a life to make my face perhaps it wasn't—

The sound of drawers opening and closing stops abruptly.

PAUL: A mirror—yes—there was one wrapped and hidden where she thought I'd never find it! Tore the paper off! I kept my eyes shut until the glass was clear and then I looked! (*He cries out in mingled horror and anguish*) Aaahh!

The sound of crashing glass as he flings it to the floor.

PAUL: (*Low*) My face . . . can I bear the memory of my face? Can I think of it even now gun in hand? Yes, I will, I will! What did I see—what is my face—(*His voice becomes strained as if he spoke of these things with great difficulty*) A brow? No brow! A thing that sloped away. Nose? A thick wad of ugly flesh protruding out between two close-set eyes! My eyes—my eyes—Mother of God—my eyes! Two tiny red-rimmed green-flecked globes that stood far out beyond the lids and twinkled like a fat round pig's. My eyes. *That* was why they laughed at me! *My* eyes! (*Derisively, close by*) Ugliest Man in the World! Yes . . . I was that . . . no longer boy—Ugliest *man* in the world . . . Not even tears could help me now . . . The world outside—at last I had to go out into it—make a living—get a job.

We hear the usual street noises, trolley bells, automobile horns, and the sound of tires rolling over the pavement. They continue clear for a moment and then fade into the background.

VOICE: Job? You want a job?
PAUL: Job . . .
VOICE: Work for *me?* Huh!
PAUL: (*More hopelessly*) Job . . .
VOICE: Say, ya think I'm runnin' a circus side-show?
PAUL: Job.
VOICES: (*In alternation with increasing tempo*)
Get out!
Circus side-show!
Get out!
Circus side-show!
Get out!
Circus side-show! Side-show! (*Louder*) Side-show!

(*Louder*) Side-show!

We are at a circus—calliope, crowds, and all that makes up the picture of a circus lot. We hear the spiel of the barker far back. The other sounds recede, and the voice of the barker becomes clearer . . .

BARKER: Step up, ladies and gents, step up! The one and only . . .

PAUL: (*Reminiscing, but in a tone which bellies his words*) Wasn't bad there . . . no . . .

BARKER: . . . that's what I said, come on, ladies and gents, that's what I said, the ugliest man in the world! At only a dime. The very small part of a dollar! Something to talk about, something to tell your children and your grandchildren when you get home—you saw the ugliest man in the world! That's it, step closer . . . closer, closer . . . Not a freak, not a frame-up but an actual breathing living man a man ugly enough to frighten Karloff. A man with a face that stopped clocks all over the world . . . (*The voice of the barker fades*)

PAUL: (*Slowly*) Didn't mind . . . after a while . . . Faces looking up at me again—staring, whispering, getting their dime's worth—spieler talking—faces staring—whispers—snickers—didn't mind, why should I? I could get away from them! Yes, stand there in the noise and laughter—and leave them far behind! Leave the smell of them and the noise of them and the twisting faces of them. *His voice begins to fade*) Shut my eyes and leave them! Quickly! Quickly!

And all the sounds of the circus and the barker's spiel fade out.

Music. A sweet sunny strain, calm as green fields, languid as clouds drifting . . .

PAUL: (*Slowly, reminiscent happiness in his voice*) I'd be in a field, sun-drenched—face to the sky, the warm sun touching me, soft grass cushioning me, my arm outstretched—all around me such peace and loveliness . . . I'd lie there so happy . . . and a small white cloud in the sky, then another . . . (*With wonder in his voice*) And all at once the clouds were like a woman's face looking down at me! A woman . . .

Music—a sharp chord like a knife stab.

We hear again the sounds of the circus in the background.

PAUL: There *was* a woman.

WOMAN: (*Hard, cheap. She tries to put on the lady act occasionally, but continually forgets and is herself again.*) Hullo, big fella!

PAUL: (*Startled*) Uh—uh—hello.

WOMAN: Helluva day, uh?

PAUL: Y-yes . . .
WOMAN: Sure give you a big play—I mean the yokels—don't they?
PAUL: Y-yes . . .
WOMAN: Me, I'm with Sammy Morton—you know, the grind show.
PAUL: I— I—
WOMAN: Not one of the strippers, y'understand! I do a high class dance—you know—a semi-classical! . . . Sure been a long hot night, ain't it?
PAUL: It—it has . . .
WOMAN: Nice walking out—in the dark . . . I mean the—the air's kinda different than on the midway . . . Yeah, nice in the dark. Awful nice . . . .
PAUL: (*Not quite as vibrantly as before*) There was a woman . . .

The wind is sighing. It grows louder and subsides intermittently.

WOMAN: (*With a throaty intimate quality in her voice*) Let's stop walkin' . . . .
PAUL: (*Low*) All right.
WOMAN: (*Sighs*) Ah, it's nice, ain't it?
PAUL: Do—you like the moon?
WOMAN: Moon? Sure! You been workin' in tent-shows long, big fella?
PAUL: So complete the moon . . .
WOMAN: Boy, you sure pack 'em in. I heard tell you sell more pictures than anybody in the show! Dimes sure add up, don't they?
PAUL: I—I don't think of money very much . . .
WOMAN: (*Hastily*) Oh, me, I don't either! I just like people or I don't—who cares what they got?
PAUL: It's—it's very kind of you . . .
WOMAN: Kind? What d'ya mean?
PAUL: You . . . me . . .
WOMAN: Yeah?
PAUL: (*Slowly*) Your face . . . did you ever look down from the clouds?
WOMAN: (*Laughs throatily*) Ya mean have I ever been high? I'm high now . . . (*Intimately*) I like the dark, big fella.
PAUL: (*This time he says the words flatly*) There was a woman . . .

Sounds of the circus return in the background.

PAUL: Talking . . . they were talking . . .
WOMAN: (*Laughing throatily*) Yeah, yeah, sure, Sam, what d'ya take me for—a chump? . . . (*Her voice hardens*) Well, what do *you* think? His face makes me sick to look at him . . . but he's got a pocketful of dough! (*Chuckles*) My face in the clouds—that's

good, eh, Sam? So I keep lookin' up and I don't have to see *his* mug! So we get along fine and last week, so last week I got a telegram from my Mamma—(*Chuckles*) Poor Mamma and the mortgage—and yesterday while he was looking at me up in the clouds I got another handful o' bucks and maybe in a couple o' weeks I—

A door slams shut, and she breaks off sharply. Paul has come into the room.

WOMAN: (*Gasping*) You! . . . (*There is mingled fright and bravado in her voice*) All right so ya heard! So what? . . . What're ya starin' at? I don't like your face! You heard me—I don't like your face!

PAUL: (*Tensely*) I gave you—

WOMAN: You gave me a couple o' laughs! That's all a face like yours is good for—for the laughs!

PAUL: Love . . .

WOMAN: Love? (*She laughs uproariously*) D'ya hear that? Love? D'ya think any woman could love a mug like yours? It's not a face—it's a mug, a puss, a pan! Yeah, ya hang it up in the dark and scare kids with it for Halloween! Go on, beat it, get outta here! No more walks with me, big fella! I've had a belly-full o' laughs and I—(*In sudden fright*) Hey, what're ya—no, stay away from me! Don't—ah—

Her voice breaks off with the loud slap of his hand against her face.

Silence. And then we hear the sound of a train—the click-clack of railroad ties, an occasional whistle.

PAUL: Go on—beat it—get out! Yeah—get out as far as I could get out! . . . Any place . . . Anywhere . . . (*In time to the click-clack of the train*) Any place any place—anywhere—anywhere—get away—get away get away—

WOMAN: (*As if from a great distance*) It isn't a face—it's a mug, a pan, a puss! (*She laughs viciously*)

Her laugher fades. We hear only the sound of the train, the clacking ties . . . a whistle. Then all is still.

PAUL: Get away! (*Low, in semi-monotone*) Yeah, got away—good and far away—fields—grain—a farm—they didn't care what kind of face—just work hard . . . work work work hour after hour sweat salt on my lips work keep working you don't think when you work hour after hour day after day. The sun over the fields frying your brain . . . (*Exultantly*) and I couldn't think I couldn't think it was good I couldn't think! But I'm thinking now—gun in my hand—

stop that thinking—gun in my hand—no! Got to think out my life—think it out clearly . . . Think of that day . . . she waved at me . . .

Music begins softly. It is a tender theme, and continues low while Paul goes on remembering . . .

PAUL: Was working . . . bent over . . . sun hot on my back . . . Grain thick around me filling the world, covering, hiding me . . . I straightened up. Something moving through the grain on the road, climbing the hill so far away hardly tell just what it was. Shaded my eyes from the sun. (*Tensely*) I saw! A woman on horseback! No, so small—must be a girl. I saw her arm wave at me! I dropped in the grain! I hid! Leave me alone! . . . Leave me alone!

The music swells briefly and continues softly as before.

PAUL: The next day again! Standing in the grain—a tiny figure on horseback—waved at me! I dropped in the grain again! No! No more! Just the sky and the grain and the work was all I wanted!

The music grows louder—and becomes faint again.

PAUL: The next day and the next—a girl on horseback riding far off there on the road—waving at *me* in the grain! Waving at me day after day—and one day I—I didn't drop in the grain. I stood—I waved back at her.

A climax of joyous music.

PAUL: Waving at me . . . because she couldn't see me . . . see my—

The music stops.

WOMAN: Face—puss—pan—mug . . .

PAUL: So she waved at me . . . and I waved back . . . and soon I was waiting for that moment in the day when she'd pass in the distance and her arm would lift toward me . . . I waited for that . . . just waited . . . Then I was thinking about her all the time—I had so much time to think in my loneliness! What did she look like, what did she look like who was she, where did she come from, and what did she look like—what did she look like? I—I don't remember how—in spite of myself one day I was hiding in the grain at the edge of the road—waiting—for *her* . . .

There is the sound of horse's hoofs approaching.

PAUL: (*Tensely*) Wanted to run yet I stayed . . . wanted to cover my eyes yet I looked . . . looked with eyes as big as all my loneliness!

We hear the hoofs coming quite close now, ambling slowly along. The horse snorts.

PAUL: Horse knew I was there . . . she didn't . . . she started singing

a little song as she passed—a song without meaning—warm as the sun.

We hear her singing a happy little tune. Slowly it fades, and the dull placking of hoofs fades with it; they have passed.

PAUL: And I saw! (*There is wonder in his voice*) I saw her! Face as lovely as mine was ugly! Young—lovely—young—lovely—the words tumbled over and over in my head as I watched her go by! Young and lovely . . . I began to see *her* face everywhere in the grain in the sky and at night in the dark.

VOICE: (*Whispering*) Ugliest man in the world—

PAUL: —thinking of the loveliest face in the world. I tried to stop but I couldn't help it—I couldn't. The loneliness in me was a pain I couldn't endure any more.

He seems to hear the sound of the horse's hoofs and the simple song she had been singing.

PAUL: Again and again I hid in the grain and watched her go by me. Just a quick moment—and then she was gone—and I was left in loneliness again . . . But I couldn't meet her—I knew that one look at my face and she'd scream—she'd run—yes even laugh! Laugh, laugh and if she laughed I knew my . . . world would end—crack in the laughter and crush me under! (*Broodingly*) If she couldn't see my face . . . Yes, if she were blind! Read a book like that somewhere—woman never saw the man she loved—if *she* couldn't see *me!* Only know me as I am, my voice, my thought, my dream, ambitions! *If she couldn't see!* . . . Dangerous dreams—day dreams —that brought me to a gun in my hand . . . (*Misery in his voice*) But I was lonely! I had nothing! So I had dreams of her, blind, not knowing my face! Not knowing and her face close to mine and her lips . . . I said it, yes I said it over and over again—Mother in Heaven—if she were only blind! *If she were only blind!* (*There is self-horror in his voice*) Wish father to the deed—that day working in the grain—looked up—she was riding by—so early—why so early? Her little hand waving at me—then the rush of an auto—

The shriek of auto brakes—as if from a distance, but shrill and terrifying. And a woman screaming.

PAUL: (*Breathing heavily*) I ran, the grain tearing at me—holding me back! In a moment she was in my arms!

GIRL: (*With shock and confusion in her voice*) Help me—please help me! I can't see! (*tearfully*) I can't see!

PAUL: (*After a pause—slowly, low*) Can't see! I dreamed it prayed it and now—

GIRL: I can't see!

PAUL: What have I done? What have I done?
VOICE: (*As from a distance*) Concussion—nerve block—
PAUL: (*Confused*) No, I—I had nothing to do with it—just a thought —I—I had only *thought!* But now she couldn't see me! Couldn't see me!
GIRL: You've been very kind to me, Mr. Martin . . . Paul.

A great, free strain of music, full of release and joy. It fades briefly.

PAUL: Music—everlasting music in my ears!

The music swells a moment and fades.

GIRL: Come here every day, won't you?

Music—briefly.

GIRL: It's so good having you to talk to . . .

A bright chord.

GIRL: You've made these wonderful days, Paul!

A sweeping strain of joyous music. It fades.

PAUL: Music—everlasting music—her voice—being with her—knowing her—and she—
GIRL: You've such a good mind, Paul—the best I've ever known, I needed a mind like yours.

Harmonious chords.

GIRL: (*Laughing happily*) I'm laughing, Paul, because you've made me happy again—you, Paul—and I—I bless you for it!

Music breaks forth jubilantly.

PAUL: Happy days—endless days—quicksilver days—then the day . . .

The music continues a moment and stops.

GIRL: Paul, I've been waiting for you!
PAUL: (*Love of her is in his voice*) I wanted to be here sooner but the grain . . .
GIRL: (*Laughingly*) The grain! Is it very tall and bold now, Paul?
PAUL: Very!
GIRL: Remember how the grain used to keep us apart? Before I even knew you! Before I'd wave and the grain was between us and I never knew you!
PAUL: Is knowing me . . . important?
GIRL: (*Lovingly*) Paul . . .
PAUL: Do you know me now?
GIRL: You're the only one I've wanted to be with me . . .
PAUL: *Do* you know me now?

GIRL: You're the only one I've wanted to be with me . . .

PAUL: *Do* you know me now?

GIRL: You know so little about me to ask me that . . .

PAUL: You're . . . lovely . . .

GIRL: My family . . . why I came to live out here alone . . . Paul—Paul, listen to me. I know you now better than I could if my eyes were open and twice as wise as they ever could have been!

PAUL: You're lovely.

GIRL: And so are you . . .

PAUL: I—(*Slowly*) You've never seen me.

GIRL: When people have talked together as much as you and I . . . every little hope and hurt, dream and plan . . . don't they know more than if they looked at faces? And what *do* you look like, Paul?

PAUL: I—

GIRL: No, let me guess! I've sat here in the dark and seen your face so many times before me!

PAUL: My face . . .

GIRL: Yes, let me tell you! It's a large virile face—a face that matches up with all the strength of you! Strong straight mouth, firm chin, skin brown yet soft, straight nose that's not too small (*Laughing softly*) yet not too large! And then your eyes—

PAUL: Eyes!

GIRL: Oh yes, your eyes! I'll tell you about your eyes. They're large and dark . . . and gentle . . . gentle as the way of you, Paul . . . Well, how close was I to knowing you?

PAUL: (*With effort*) Give me . . . your hand . . .

GIRL: No, no! I don't want to touch your face!

PAUL: You—

GIRL: Later, yes, but not now, Paul! I want you to read me something!

PAUL: Read—

GIRL: Yes, so strange we were talking about faces when I've had this book for you to read me. One of my favorites—of a man with courage! Look—do you know the book, Paul?

PAUL: (*Begins to read*) "Cyrano de—" (*He breaks off*)

GIRL: Yes, brave Cyrano de Bergerac! You've read the play, of course?

PAUL: I—I never have . . .

GIRL: Then I envy you! I wish I'd never read it so that I could read—hear it all over again! Please read it for me—start any place! . . . Read it, Paul!

PAUL: (*Reading*) "Thou lovest her? Tell her! For I do surmise thou art a hero in her eyes!"

GIRL: That was Le Bret! Cyrano's friend! Now go on, read Cyrano's speech!

PAUL: (*Begins to read again with slowly increasing difficulty*) "Nay.

Shall I woo the loveliest maid in France—look at me, friend, with my poor big devil of a nose—I dream, even I, of walking 'neath that beam, loving, beloved. As I dream my soul expands, exults, but soars to fall. I see my profile shadowed on the wall."

GIRL: You read it with your heart, Paul . . .

PAUL: He was . . . ugly?

GIRL: The rest of him was beauty—just his nose . . . Read Cyrano's lines and I'll try to remember Roxane's. She was the woman he loves, and he never dared tell her of his love because of his ugliness. Read, Paul—the top of the page! Roxane calls, "Sister! Oh Sister!" Read, Paul!

PAUL: (*Reading*) "No, call no one here. Ere you come back, I should have gone away. I longed for harmony to end my day."

GIRL: "I love you! Live!"

PAUL: "In fairy tales, long since, the princess said that, and the ugly prince lost all his plainness in that sudden sun. But see! I finish as I was begun!"

GIRL: "I made your grief, I, I!"

PAUL: "You made my bliss. I lacked all woman's kindness . . . even this . . . My mother found me ugly. And I had no sister. Lest they mock an ugly lad, I shunned all women. You became my friend. One soft gown brushed my path before the end."

GIRL: And then the moon comes out and Le Bret says, "Thy other love!" Cyrano loved the moon!

PAUL: (*Brokenly*) "Welcome, fair friend above."

GIRL: "I loved but once, and twice I lose my love!"

PAUL: (*Tears in his voice*) "I loved but once, and twice I lose my love!"

GIRL: Paul! You . . . cry . . .

PAUL: Cry? What is there to cry about?

GIRL: It's true! There's no reason to cry! Just a play—in life no man could be such a fool!

PAUL: (*Softly*) Goodbye . . .

GIRL: Goodbye? No, no, don't leave me, Paul! I haven't had a chance to tell you! Tomorrow *I* go!

PAUL: (*Slowly*) You?

GIRL: My family . . . I'm strong enough to be moved now . . .

PAUL: Where—

GIRL: Paul, we've talked so much of anything and everything but never of this! My eyes—an operation—I'll see again! That's why I didn't want to see your face with hands! I'll see you with my eyes, Paul! (*Fading*) See you with my eyes! See you with my eyes!

Her voice fades and we are back in the dark lonely room where Paul has been sitting, remembering.

PAUL: See again! See again! See *what?*

He hears children laughing the way they had done that first awful day at school.

PAUL: A face to laugh at!
VOICE: Ugliest man in the world!
PAUL: A face to jeer at!
WOMAN: A puss—a pan—a mug!
PAUL: Face to shout at! (*Brokenly*) But not to love! Not to love! "Never will I, so long as I am master, let beauty so divine meet such disaster—ugliness mar perfection." Cyrano, I'll read you a thousand times because *she* read you! The author gave *you* a paper nose but my ugliness is flesh and blood! Flesh and blood! Flesh and blood to see, to hate—she'll never see me never never! Lift the muzzle press the trigger trigger cold against my finger cold as death but life is colder thoughts in my mind like a whirling circle.
VOICES: (*Whispering over and over*) Ugliest man in the world—ugliest man in the world—
PAUL: (*Through the voices*) Press the trigger press the trigger press the trigger—

The door opens. The voices stop.

GIRL: (*Low*) Paul?
PAUL: (*Tensely*) Who is it?
GIRL: (*Louder*) Paul!
PAUL: Ah . . .
GIRL: Paul, where's the light?
PAUL: You see!
GIRL: It's . . . been weeks—I've been searching—where's the light, Paul?
PAUL: Forget me!
GIRL: So dark—in your hand—what—(*She feels the gun*) Oh, Paul!
PAUL: I wasted too much time thinking . . .
GIRL: (*With tears in her voice*) Oh, my dearest!
PAUL: Forget me I tell you! You knew me in the dark—well, now it's light for you and I'm not meant for light! Forget me!
GIRL: I want to know you . . . in the light . . . your ugliness . . .

Paul breathes in sharply at the words.

GIRL: Yes, Paul, I've known—first when you cried with Cyrano . . . then I asked the others and they told me . . .
PAUL: But you don't know! My face! A thing—
GIRL: A thing apart, as my blindness was apart from me. I love you . . .
PAUL: You . . . love . . .
GIRL: Love you! Yes, Yes! I love you!
PAUL: You . . . don't . . . know . . .

GIRL: But I *will* know! Turn on the light, Paul . . . (*Vibrantly*) I'm not afraid! Turn on the light! I love you! Live! For me!

PAUL: "In fairy tales, long since, the princess said that and the ugly prince . . . lost all his plainness in (*Glowingly*) that sudden sun!"

A great burst of glad, triumphant music!

C B S

presents

THE MOAT
FARM MURDER

by

Norman Corwin

ANY POLL of the intelligentsia to decide who is radio's all-time artistic maestro, or perhaps we should say maestrissimo, would find the followers of Norman Corwin making a strong bid to put him at the top of the list.

In a collection which contains the work of more than one other aspirant to the same honor, I am not going out on a limb with any vote of my own.

But for the purposes of this volume I do think it worth mentioning that Norman Corwin is one of the most readable of radio writers; and some of his scripts, which are virtually prose poems with sound effects and music, stand up almost as well in silence.

Those of you who are familiar with Corwin's more important productions may be interested to see his approach to a crime. He has asked me to make it quite clear that this is not an original story of his, but is an adaptation of an actual confession of murder which was published in a British periodical several years ago.

LC

THE MOAT FARM MURDER

by

NORMAN CORWIN

The Characters

DOUGAL ..... *the murderer*
INSPECTOR ..... *the listener*
CECILE ..... *the murderee*
SERVANT GIRL ..... *the frightened*
PILGRIM ..... *the laborer*

Music. A simple melody. Slowly it gains force and becomes discordant . . . and ends suddenly on a clashing note.

The scene is a police office in England. Sitting in the room are the Inspector, a few policemen, a stenographer—— and a man around fifty or so, a little on the stout side, and in appearance not particularly imposing. His name is Mr Dougal. He seems to be calm, his only signs of nervousness being that he wets his lips frequently and now and then runs a hand over his thinning gray hair.

INSPECTOR: And now if the stenographer is ready, we will proceed with Mr Dougal's confession from where we left off in our last session. Go ahead, Mr Dougal.

DOUGAL: I did not find Miss Holland as generous as I expected; in fact, until we actually went to the Moat Farm she drew but very little money, but what I did have I soon got through, and that was why I suggested that we should buy a farm. I told her that my father would not live long, and that upon his death I was entitled to a large sum of money, and I further showed her a claim I had against the War Office for arrears of pay due to me.

The scene presents itself to Dougal's mind as it occurred that day he showed Cecile Holland his claim:

CECILE: When will the payment on this claim be made?

DOUGAL: Oh, when they get around to it I suppose. You know how they are at the War Office.

CECILE: (*Busy reading*) Yes, well . . . No, no——don't take it back. I want to read it a bit more closely.

Dougal goes on with his confession:

DOUGAL: She was a very careful old lady, and she examined the documents I produced to her very carefully. I did not like this because I was afraid that she would detect erasures and alterations in some of them, so I rather resented the way in which she received the statements I made, and, finding that I was rather cross, she said she would never doubt me again, but put the utmost faith in me. If she drew any money out of the bank she was very careful with it, and used to jot down on a little slip of paper even items for a shilling or so.

Dougal hears her counting her money to herself just as he had heard her many times:

CECILE: One and tuppence . . . three bob . . . two and sixpence . . .

DOUGAL: I thought that the sooner I got her to buy a farm the sooner I should be able to deal with the profits and so have some money for myself.

He remembers the scene as it happened when he tried to persuade her to buy the farm as he wanted:

CECILE: But do you know anything about managing a farm?

DOUGAL: Of course, my dear. I once managed a large estate.

CECILE: You did?

DOUGAL: Certainly, and I warrant that if we could obtain a suitable farm, I'd make it very profitable.

CECILE: What would you grow on it?

DOUGAL: Why, mushrooms, tomatoes, cucumbers, or perhaps I'd cultivate bees and flowers. Then, you see, by watching the markets, we could send the produce to be sold only when the demand sent prices up.

CECILE: (*Thinking this over*) Yes . . . possibly so.

He goes on with his confession:

DOUGAL: Of course, I never intended to do anything of the kind, my intention being to get her to buy the farm and transfer it to me, whereupon I meant to sell it. I meant to get hold, if possible, of all her property, and, therefore, I did not want an ordinary farm, where there would be a lot of prying neighbors or where it would be easy to get to. I should think we looked at about a dozen farms altogether, but none of them suited me until I came across the Moat House Farm. It was just the place I wanted, and I thought the moat would be very useful, because after the farm had been transferred to me it might be easy for the lady to be found in the moat.

A strain of music begins in the background. It unwinds itself like

a snake as Dougal continues talking . . .

DOUGAL: Everything went all right up to the time that the farm was purchased, and I certainly did intend that the deeds should be made out in my name, but to this Miss Holland would not consent, nor would she pay the deposit in my name, and therefore, all the visions I had had of getting hold of the farm, turning her out, and selling it, melted away. I could see she intended to be master, and that she had been so in the habit, during her life, of doing her own business that, even if we did make any profit, it would be she who would be handling the money.

We paid many visits to the Moat House Farm before we actually took possession, and finding she was so tight-fisted I began to think of various schemes to put her out of the way, but I thought I would wait a little while and see if she altered. I think she was naturally very mean, and on one or two occasions even Mrs Wiskin (the landlady) had one or two disputes with her about little items in our bill. It was strange to find a woman so mean, because otherwise she was not so bad, and she would often try, when I was miserable or down in the dumps, to cheer me up by playing or singing to me. She was old-fashioned in a lot of her ways, and when I suggested that she should buy herself new dresses, and wear more fashionable clothes, she said she would wear what she liked.

As he tells about it, Dougal remembers the way she said it, in her firm grating voice:

CECILE: I will wear what I like, is that clear? I don't *want* to be in the fashion; and in my view, if two people were fond of each other it doesn't matter what they wear.

DOUGAL: She had a lot of clothing belonging to her aunt, and she was always twisting, mending, and altering a lot of old dresses that I wouldn't have given house-room to. She was rather snappy at times, and if I didn't quite agree with everything she said, she would bounce out of the room.

The door is heard slamming.

Perhaps toward the evening she would get over her temper, and then she would come downstairs and plead for forgiveness.

We revert to the police office. Dougal continues:

DOUGAL: I didn't mind these fits of temper, because they gave me an opportunity of clearing out and having a good day and a game or two of billiards. I was drinking very heavily then, because I had made up my mind by this time to either get a lump sum out of her and clear out, or put her out of the way and have the lot. I certainly thought she had more money than she did, and although

we were such great friends, it was not without the greatest trouble that I got to know all about her financial position. She kept her check book, pass book and the details of the shares and stocks she held locked up in a little desk, and she carried the key on a chain attached to a ring in her pocket.

Music grows slowly out of the background; the tune is ominous. it continues low while Dougal keeps on with his confession . . .

DOUGAL: I made up my mind at last to put her out of the way. I used to sit and think about it for hours, because, although I had done a lot of things during my life, I couldn't quite make up my mind to go so far as to murder her. I thought once that I would have a bit of an accident, and that I would contrive to get her out of the house in her nightdress so that she might be found drowned in the moat, and that at the inquest I could say she was in the habit of walking in her sleep, and had, no doubt, fallen into the moat. But when I came to examine the water I found it was only about a foot or so deep. Once I almost decided to let her shoot herself, only she had such a horror of firearms that she would not let me even keep them in the house. I thought I could get her in one of the rooms alone, and while I was fiddling about with the revolver I would contrive to fire it off just as one of the servants came into the room, so that she could give evidence that it was an accident. I tried to get her to make a will, leaving everything to me, while I made one also, leaving everything to her.

He still hears the conversation as it happened between them, Cecile objecting . . .

CECILE: But why do that?
DOUGAL: It only seems to me the right and proper thing to do.
CECILE: (*Not interested*) Well, I've already made my will.
DOUGAL: You have?
CECILE: Yes, and I don't intend to alter it.
DOUGAL: (*To the police again*) All this caused me a lot of trouble, and I used to sit for hours and hours conjuring up all kinds of schemes to get rid of her. All this time I got positively to hate her, and when we actually moved into the farm I had definitely decided what I should do. I thought that a very good place to bury her would be the ditch, and that was why the very first week we were at the farm I gave orders for it to be filled in. Although she knew nothing about it, she came out of the house and stood by the side of the ditch whilst I and Pilgrim, the laborer, were discussing the best way to fill it up. The elder tree stood by the side, and I can see her there now, holding one of the boughs, and arguing against

the ditch being filled in until proper arrangements had been made for draining it another way.

Dougal's voice fades and the scene changes to a corner of the farm, by the ditch, as he has just described. We can hear the sound of a spade digging; Dougal is filling in a part of the moat, while the laborer, Pilgrim, is working at a little distance.

CECILE: I don't think you know what you're about, Herbert.

DOUGAL: Cecile, my dear, I know very well what I'm doing.

CECILE: (*Bristling*) But I have a right to my opinion and more than a right to discuss what is being done on this farm. This laborer here knows more than you do about it.

DOUGAL: I prefer that we leave him out of this.

CECILE: (*Calling*) Pilgrim! Pilgrim!

PILGRIM: (*From a little distance*) Yes, ma'am?

CECILE: How do you think this should be done?

PILGRIM: (*Advancing*) Well, ma'am, I think the proper way to do the job is to make the new drain first and then fill in the ditch.

CECILE: There, you see, Herbert?

DOUGAL: I see nothing of the sort.

In the police office once more, Dougal continues with his confession:

DOUGAL: I had made up my mind what I was going to do with her, so it did not suit my purpose to accept his advice, and I insisted on the work being commenced at once, although I did not want the filling-in completed. I made up my mind at last to put Miss Holland out of the way.

Sinister strains of music swell briefly, and then continue low while Dougal goes on:

DOUGAL: Miss Holland and I had not been at the farm more than three weeks then, and I knew that if I did not soon put her out of the way more people would get to know that she was there, so I meant to shoot her the first opportunity I got. Of course, I know all about firearms, and when the wind was in a certain direction I fired the revolver off several times in the coach-house, in order to see if anyone heard it while they were in the back of the house.

We hear muffled pistol shots as they sounded when he fired them in the coach-house.

I was very glad to find that neither Miss Holland nor the servant heard any report, and I placed the revolver, fully loaded, and some cartridges on a shelf in the coach-house ready for when I wanted it.

The music suddenly stops.

INSPECTOR: Just a moment, Mr Dougal. What about the testimony of the servant girl, Blackwell, that you made advances to her late one night?

DOUGAL: What that servant girl says about going to her door is about right, although I think she exaggerates a little. I had had a skinful of brandy that night, and I don t quite remember what took place, but I know that Miss Holland, when she discovered what I had done, said she would have the farm sold, and that she would not live with me a day longer.

We had quite a row, and she accused me of a lot of things. Of course, I declared that the servant's story was a lie from top to bottom, but she stuck up for the girl, and she made herself so ill that she cried very nearly the whole of one day. On Friday morning we had made it up. We had breakfast together on Friday morning, and I then told her that my claim against the War Office had been settled and, in the future, I should devote myself to the farm. I got around her by lunch time, and we made up our quarrel and she had forgiven me, and that was why we thought of going for a drive. As it was a beautiful night we let the horse walk slowly home, and I should think it was about a quarter past eight when we got back to the farm. When I had taken the horse out I thought she would go in the house, but instead of that she made some remark about its being a beautiful moonlight night.

A delicate passage of music begins quietly, and continuing low grows steadily in discord under Dougal's confession . . .

DOUGAL: I had pushed the trap into the coach-house by this time, and I could see by the light at the back of the house that the servant girl was still there doing her work. I stepped up on the side of the trap,

We hear the hollow sound of his step . . .

reached down the revolver,

. . . and a soft scraping on wood as he pulls the revolver off the shelf.

and as Miss Holland stood just near the door looking at the moon, I shot her.

A pistol rings out——and then the dull thump of her body falling to the ground.

She dropped just like a log, and then I pulled her into the coach-house.

The music breaks out into a distinct discord . . .

DOUGAL: Of course I knew that she was dead, and yet I don't know what made me do it, but I knelt down on one knee and pulled her head up and asked her to speak if she could.

We can hear him talking to her as he did that night:

DOUGAL: Cecile! Cecile! Speak to me! Cecile, do you see me? Do you hear me? Cecile!

(*Continuing with his confession*) I didn't think this was of much use, and why I did it I can't tell even now, but I thought for a moment that she might come to, because there was no blood about, and I wasn't quite certain where the bullet had struck her.

Then, all of a sudden, I remembered that the noise of the pistol might reach the back kitchen, where I knew the girl would be having her supper, so I stepped outside, put the revolver in my pocket, pushed the doors to,

We hear the barn doors closing.

and then went into the house. I lifted up the latch that was fixed to the gate at the entrance of the moat-bridge, but almost immediately even this noise seemed to frighten me, for I stood still and listened.

There are no sounds but the call of the crickets and a rustle of the wind through the trees.

I could not turn my head toward the coach-house, and great beads of perspiration began to run down my back, for I had a most peculiar sensation as if someone was following me. I thought the doors of the coach-house had opened and she was walking out after me; I could almost feel her touch me, and as true as there is a God in heaven, I was ready to drop.

A mysterious strain of music begins playing softly.

DOUGAL: I must have stood there some seconds, and then I put my hand into my pocket and drew out the revolver and turned round and looked straight at the coach-house. I could not quite get out of my mind, nor get rid of the feeling that something or someone besides myself stood between me and the coach-house. I still had an impression that someone would come toward me, so I leveled up the revolver and stood there with it in my hand.

The music stops abruptly. Only the sounds of the night continue.

DOUGAL: I don't think I could have uttered a word to have saved my life, my tongue was like a great ball of fire, and I quite hurt myself trying to get some saliva to moisten my mouth and my parched

tongue. Then I remembered how silly it was, and I put the revolver back into my pocket and walked into the house.

His footsteps are heard on the wooden floor of the house.

We usually kept some brandy in a decanter in the sitting-room, so I pushed the door open and I picked up the decanter without waiting for a glass. I think I must have gulped down half of its contents. This seemed to steady me, and I walked along the passage, expecting to see the girl standing there watching me.

We hear a knock on the door, as the scene changes briefly to the house on Moat Farm.

GIRL: (*From within*) Who's there?

DOUGAL: Just I——Mr. Dougal.

The door opens.
Dougal continues with his confession to the police.

DOUGAL: She was still going on with her work and I looked at her to see if I could read in her face whether she knew what had happened outside. Thank God, her first words were:

GIRL: Where's the mistress?

DOUGAL: I was just able to jerk out, "She has gone to London."

I really believe that at that moment if I had even a suspicion that she knew anything about what had occurred, I should have shot her, and I knew that would not do because she had written to her mother to come and fetch her away, so I need hardly tell you how thankful I was when the girl went back to the kitchen making some remark about she thought it was very unkind of "Mrs Dougal" to go to London and leave her in the house after what had happened.

Dougal hears her voice again just as she said it that night.

GIRL: I think it's very unkind of Mrs Dougal to go to London and leave me in the house after what's happened here. Most unkind, and I shall tell her so to her face when she gets home.

DOUGAL: I don't know quite what I said, but I think I made some remark about its being all right, because the mistress would return and be there before we went to bed. I asked her whether she did not hear me drive in, and she said no, she had been working in the kitchen.

I felt quite relieved when she said this; but as I walked away into the front of the house I stopped and listened once or twice, because I fancied she might follow me and watch what I was doing, but she went on with her work just as if nothing unusual had happened, and I could see she really believed what I said, viz, that her mistress had gone to London.

A faint persistent passage of music begins in a minor key and grows louder slowly as Dougal continues:

DOUGAL: Every few minutes I broke into a violent perspiration, and then my tongue would become so hot and my lips so dry that I had to rub them with my fingers to get some feeling into them. I seized the brandy bottle again, and I had another good swig at it, and then, I don't know why, but I thought it might be all a mistake; that perhaps, after all, the bullet hadn't struck her, and that she had only fainted, and she might come to if I gave her some brandy, so I caught hold of the decanter and walked across with it in my hand to the coach-house; but I couldn't make up my mind for a second or two to go inside. I called out——"Cecily, Cecily!" And then I thought what a fool I was because everything had gone just as I had planned it, and there was not a living soul save the servant girl near, and I had nothing to fear.

The music stops.

DOUGAL: Then I went into the coach-house; but it was dark, and I pushed the door farther open so that some of the light from the moon would come in.

The door creaks open.

She was in exactly the same position as I had left her, so I knelt down and poured some of the brandy over her face, thinking perhaps it might revive her; but really I knew this was impossible because she was dead. I tried to sit her up, but she fell back, and I knew all was over then.

Again I began to conjure up all kinds of possible ways of getting rid of the body, and I made up my mind that it would be best not to put her in the ditch, but to take her away and bury her somewhere else, so I took off her hat and her veil and the jacket she was wearing, and I picked her up in my arms and walked down the side of the little moat.

The music begins again—— a dirge-like procession—— under Dougal's voice:

DOUGAL: I picked her up in my arms, and, just as you would carry a baby, I carried her out of the coach-house and laid her on the straw which I had put in the ditch. Then a change came over me, but the more brandy I drank the more brutal and wicked I seemed to get. One minute I wanted to kiss her, and the next minute I wanted to pitch a lot of mold over her, but at last I made up my mind that I would bury her and get her out of sight.

A short emphatic burst of music.

Dougal goes on . . .

DOUGAL: I thought of what had happened but a few days before, when she stood by the side of the ditch talking to Pilgrim and myself about filling in the ditch.

He can still hear the voice of Cecile saying . . .

CECILE: I don't think you know what you're about, Herbert.

DOUGAL: I thought, perhaps, unless I covered her over, the fowls would scratch away the straw, so I got some brambles and twigs, and pieces of wood, and I stretched them over her body. Then I made up my mind to go into the house again and tell the servant that I had been to the station, and that there was no possibility of her mistress coming, that evidently she had lost the train, and that she had better go to bed. I went outside and I picked up the fork, and I put a thin layer of earth over the brambles and straw . . .

We hear the hushed grating of his fork in the earth and the sound of it falling over the straw and twigs.

. . . and I went back into the house and had some more brandy, and then I went to bed.

Music begins playing softly. Without growing louder it becomes disturbed and restless . . .

DOUGAL: I couldn't sleep; and I got up and walked round the farm and down to the road and back again. I couldn't keep my eyes off the ditch; and I kept thinking that perhaps the fowls would get loose and they would scratch the mould away, so I got down into the ditch and kicked some more earth over her until it was about a foot deep. Once or twice I was tempted to pull the straw away and have another look at her face, but I tore myself away and walked about the farm.

I am sure I aged that night twenty years. I never closed my eyes the whole night long, and I could not keep still or rest for even a quarter of an hour. I tried to read, I tried to write, I tried to sleep, but it was all in vain. Not one single moment's peace did I have, and I am sure that if I went to the ditch once I went twenty times.

I was very anxious to see the back of the servant girl, and, therefore, I was pleased when her mother came next day and took her away. I knew the girl had not the slightest suspicion as to what had happened the previous night, because I felt certain that she would have accused me to my face. When I got back to the farm I walked into the house, quite pleased to find that there was no one there, and that I had it all to myself; but I had some strange feeling that, somehow or other, that servant girl would do me some harm.

The first thing I did when I got into the house was to open Miss Holland's desk and go through a lot of her papers, in order to find

out, if possible, how much money she had. She kept her accounts very neatly, but I was very disappointed when I found that she was not worth more than six or seven thousand pounds. I thought perhaps Miss Holland had some more cash concealed about the place somewhere, so I turned over her trunks and boxes.

We hear the trunks and boxes being moved about and opened . . .

But I could not find any, and I certainly did feel disappointed.

I now began to practice signing Miss Holland's name; but it was a long time before I could do it to my satisfaction, because my hand trembled more than ever it had before, and it now took a lot of brandy for me to steady myself.

I started having terrible dreams at night, and as I went about the house I began to fancy I could hear Miss Holland's voice. I think if I went once to look at the ditch I went a hundred times a day, and I am sure if anyone had watched me, they would have grown suspicious and thought that there must be something under that ditch. Of course, everything had gone off just in the manner I had planned it, and I began to congratulate myself upon the plans I had laid and the way I had carried them out.

A cheerful strain of music. Then suddenly the tone changes, and a feeling of suspicion and fear creeps into the theme. It continues playing in the background . . .

DOUGAL: I come now to a terrible part of my life, because, however clever one may be and however well one's plans have been carried out, there always is the suspicion lurking at the back of your head that you may have made one little blunder which will lead to the truth coming out. I used to watch every post in order to see if there were any letters from Miss Holland's relatives.

I used to watch every person who came to the farm; also it was rather an anxious time for me when I sent the first letter to her bankers, because I was not quite certain as to whether or not the imitation I made of her signature would pass the bank clerks. The bank sent the money, but at the same time they asked that a fresh signature should be given, and it was this that led me to inventing the story that the difference in Miss Holland's signature was due to a sprained hand.

The music strikes out sharply and fades away.

DOUGAL: I had been drinking rather heavily about this time, and I could see that I must be careful, and that I should have to steady myself before I imitated her signature any more; but after this not one single signature was ever questioned, and I got so perfect

in signing her name that I could sign it a couple of dozen times with but very little difference in them.

At first I thought I would spend the money on the farm and make it a good paying property, but I am afraid that looking after a lot of farm laborers was not to my liking, and I let everything go, and I never worried myself about the crops. I couldn't waste my time discussing with a lot of thick-headed laborers whether it would be better to sow turnips instead of mangold wurzels. The more I heard about farming the more I hated it, so I let all the land grow hay, which was very much cheaper, and which brought in a few pounds.

It's all very well to try and drown your thoughts in drink, and, as sure as I am alive on this earth, no one tried harder than I did to banish entirely from my mind all recollections of that terrible night, but I found that it was physically impossible. It did not matter where I was, or who was with me, the moment there was a lull in the conversation, the moment my attention was taken from anything, away back to the farm went my thoughts and again and again the whole of the incidents of the three weeks Miss Holland lived there came before me. Sometimes I would walk about the farm by myself, and if I did there was always that feeling that she was going to step out of the grave and touch me on the shoulder. There was always the feeling wherever I went that something was near me; that there was someone present besides myself, and yet I knew that there was not. I never could really make up my mind that she was dead, and yet I knew she was. As sure as I stand here, I can swear that I have gone into the coach-house hundreds of times, expecting to see her lying on her back as I dragged her in there. Nothing would make me believe this false until I had gone in and seen for myself.

I did this two or three times a day sometimes, and all the time I knew I had buried her in the ditch, and that she was still there. I have tried to reason with myself times out of number, but it was no good—— I had to go into that coach-house and see for myself that she was not there.

Sometimes, when I have been walking along or sitting in a railway carriage, I have closed my eyes and tried to make myself believe that it was all a dream, and that Miss Holland wasn't dead, and it was some foolish thought that I had got into my mind. I have got up and said to myself, "You are not a murderer, old man, whatever else you may be," and then I have sat down again, and I have felt much better and more satisfied, but unfortunately this didn't last very long.

Music rises ominously and continues under his confession.

DOUGAL: A few minutes later my mind traveled back to May nineteenth, and there I could see myself loading the revolver in the

morning, putting it on the shelf, and then taking the pony out of the trap, and standing on the step and shooting her.

We hear again——as from a distance——the same shot.

Why, three years after she had been dead, I could close my eyes and still feel that I had her in my arms; I could still feel her head hanging over my shoulders, and I could still see her face as I laid her in the ditch.

The music stops.

DOUGAL: At one time drink would send me to sleep, and, perhaps for a few hours I would forget all about the Moat Farm; but as time went on I found it impossible to get a night's rest, and then I took to walking in my sleep, and I thought I should have gone mad when I found I was a somnambulist. I remember one night I returned from London, and I don't think I was quite sober, and, after having a good look around, I went to bed, I should think about eleven o'clock. I remember quite well taking off my clothes and getting into bed, but just before daybreak I suddenly came to myself and I found that I was standing by the side of the ditch and that a spade was in my hand. I was in my nightshirt, and I had got out of the bedroom, walked down the stairs, opened the door, crossed over the moat-bridge, gone into the coach-house, and then gone to the grave with the spade in my hand. I think I must have been standing there a long time, because I was very cold and my nightshirt was wet with dew. I shook from head to foot, and my teeth chattered and I was aching in every limb when I awoke, so I pitched the spade into the coach-house and went back to bed, and there I lay awake, counting the hours.

A clock strikes four.

I was really afraid of myself, and I thought that one of these mornings the laborers would come in and find me standing there, and I thought of all kinds of methods to prevent myself being found there. The only way that I could prevent myself walking in my sleep was locking the gate at the entrance of the moat-bridge. I put a bit of chain around it, and before I went to bed I used to see that it was padlocked. Although this did not prevent my walking in my sleep, it stopped me going out to the ditch, because I used to go right up to the gate, and as it was locked I feel certain I used to turn round and go back to bed. I know I did this because one day the gate was painted white, and when I woke up one morning I found my hands covered with white paint, which showed that I had been down to the gate and tried to open it.

Conflicting passages of music begin in the background. They play in a pattern of counterpoint, without relationship to each other.

DOUGAL: I got very ill about this time, and I felt certain that I should go mad if I did not do something to distract my thoughts. I thought I would go to Paris, and at last I made up my mind to get one big check cashed and go away for good.

I packed my bag, putting all the things I wanted in it, and I caught an early train to Newport Station. At Liverpool Street I met some people I knew, and got on the drink again, but I managed to catch the midnight mail to Paris.

A strong burst of music, fading quickly . . .

Then we hear train wheels, clacking and rhythmic. They grow louder and louder; we hear nothing else, until at last they fade away.

INSPECTOR: Tell me, Mr Dougal, when did you first begin to sense danger——before or after the investigation of your forgery?

DOUGAL: When the Superintendent called at the farm I began to see danger, and I thought it best to leave the farm once and forever. I didn't know where I was going when I left it, and sometimes I didn't seem to care whether they found me out or whether they didn't. I was so tired of it all, and yet the moment I thought of a hand being placed on my shoulder I conjectured up all kinds of pictures. I have seen myself tried; I have heard myself sentenced, and I have felt myself standing on the scaffold with the rope round my neck. Yet when I was arrested I felt bound to make an effort to escape. I did not care very much about the forgery charges, because I knew that at the utmost it would only mean a short time of penal servitude, but every time I went into the court my heart was in my mouth almost, until I found that, in spite of their searching and digging, they hadn't touched the ditch.

INSPECTOR: And when the body was found?

DOUGAL: When the body was found I made up my mind to put a bold face on it.

A few low notes of music, developing into a tragic theme.

DOUGAL: But at times as I sat in my cell I often thought that, after all, I was only living a life of misery, and it would be better to end it.

A sharp chord——changing key, and breaking into a brief discordant melody. It rises to a crescendo and ends on a stroke of finality.

ELLERY QUEEN

presents

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MURDERED SHIP

by

Ellery Queen

SINCE *so many murderers have been the most charming people personally, it is scarcely surprising that so many writers of murder should have the same liberal endowment of charm.*

My own charm, which is so well known to you, is only exceeded by the charm of the two gentlemen who are best known to you under their joint name of Ellery Queen. For many years Ellery Queen have been including Saint stories in most of those scholarly anthologies from the various fields of crime which they regularly compile with so much ingenuity and monumental research.

The only reason I have hitherto been unable to reciprocate is that their short stories are all currently under option to a syndicate which will not release them for my use.

It is therefore with extraordinary pleasure that I find myself able at last to use an Ellery Queen radio script in this collection.

In sending it to me Ellery Queen wrote:

> *"This was a 'command performance', so to speak, by the O W I, with whom we co-operated in the 'loose talk' campaign. As a special assignment from Washington, it represents——we think——something superior in radio propaganda, inasmuch as it doesn't bat its audience over the head, but approaches the lesson through entertainment.*
>
> *"This sort of program, serving a higher purpose than mere commercial entertainment, surely deserves being anthologized."*

I can only say that I thoroughly agree, and I hope you will too.

L C

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MURDERED SHIP

by

ELLERY QUEEN

The Characters

ELLERY QUEEN ..... ***the detective***
NIKKI PORTER ..... ***the secretary***
INSPECTOR QUEEN ..... ***Ellery's father***
SGT VELIE ..... ***the inspector's aide***
HIGH OFFICIAL ..... ***a government man***
MRS BROWN ..... ***an American mother***
REV JONES ..... ***an American father***
MRS SMITH ..... ***an American bride***

SCENE 1: The Private Office of a High Official in Washington. Ellery Queen and his father, Inspector Queen, are ushered into the Official's office. Both men seem puzzled, anxious, and apprehensive.

OFFICIAL: Sit down, gentlemen.

Ellery and the Inspector take chairs hesitantly.

Mr Queen, I suppose you're wondering why I asked you to come.

ELLERY QUEEN: (*Very respectfully*) Yes, sir. An urgent summons from such a distinguished Government official as yourself, Sir—— I can't imagine why I should be so honored.

INSPECTOR QUEEN: Sir, I hope you don't mind my coming along with my son. I was——well, a little nervous——

OFFICIAL: I quite understand, Inspector Queen; glad you came. Mr Queen, I've summoned you to Washington to lay a very important case before you——(*Quietly*) the most important case you'll ever be called upon to investigate.

ELLERY: I'm completely at your service.

OFFICIAL: (*Gravely*) On a certain date——recently——a certain armed vessel of the United States was waylaid by a swarm of enemy submarines on the high seas. At exactly 5 PM three torpedoes crashed into our ship, and it sank almost immediately. The loss of American lives was considerable.

ELLERY: (*Low*) I'm sorry to learn that, Sir.

OFFICIAL: This ship was involved in an extremely important operation, gentlemen. Its loss through surprise submarine attack not only caused the deaths of a large number of American fighting men, but a war plan closely integrated with the over-all Allied strategy was licked before it got started.

ELLERY: But the plan must have been a strict War Department secret!

OFFICIAL: (*Dryly*) It was even stricter than usual, Mr Queen. Only six people knew it——and their integrity cannot possibly be questioned. Yet——that nest of enemy subs was lying in wait.

INSPECTOR: Mightn't they have been there by pure accident, Sir?

OFFICIAL: No, Inspector. In the naval action which followed the attack, one of the enemy subs was captured by our forces. The enemy commander has been thoroughly interrogated, his effects examined. There's no doubt that those subs had positive information.

ELLERY: But if total secrecy was maintained, Sir, how did the enemy *get* its information?

OFFICIAL: That, Mr Queen, is why you're in Washington today. In the first place, the investigating agencies of the Government are short-handed. We can use all the expert help we can get.

INSPECTOR: And I suppose my son's reputation for solving tough problems qualifies him——eh, Sir?

OFFICIAL: Very much so, Inspector. But there's still another reason I called you, Mr Queen.

ELLERY: What's that, Sir?

OFFICIAL: You're involved.

ELLERY: (*Blankly*) I beg your pardon, Sir?

INSPECTOR: (*Aghast*) My son's involved . . . in the sinking of one of our ships by the enemy? I don't get it, Sir.

OFFICIAL: Neither do we, Inspector. We haven't had time to work on it. The clue reached Washington only this morning.

He hands Ellery a piece of paper.

This scrap of paper, Mr Queen, was found on the captured enemy sub commander.

ELLERY: Thank you, Sir.

He examines it.

But——this is fantastic!

INSPECTOR: For Pete's sake, son, what's on that paper?

ELLERY: Just two words, Dad——or rather a word and an initial. (*he reads aloud slowly*) "Ellery Q."

INSPECTOR: Ellery Q! But——how in time did your name get on a memo in the possession of an enemy sub commander, son?

ELLERY: (*Grimly*) I'd certainly like to find out.

OFFICIAL: (*Dryly amused*) I take it, then, Mr Queen, you'd welcome the opportunity to investigate this case?
ELLERY: Try me, Sir!
OFFICIAL: Very well. Effective immediately, consider yourself a special investigator for the United States Government.
ELLERY: (*Crisply*) Thank you, Sir. To whom am I to report?
OFFICIAL: You're accountable directly to me . . . Inspector, it's been a pleasure.

The Inspector responds in the usual manner.

OFFICIAL: Mr Queen, good luck.
ELLERY: Thank you, Sir. I'll find out how those enemy subs knew about that ship if I never solve another case in my life!

SCENE 2: The Queen Apartment in New York. Next day. In the apartment are Ellery Queen and his secretary, Nikki Porter. They have been talking about Ellery's new commission to solve the mystery of the torpedoed US warship.

NIKKI: Do you suppose the Inspector and Sergeant Velie will get a leave of absence from the Police Department, Ellery?
ELLERY: (*Chuckling*) I've deputized them as assistant special investigators, haven't I, Nikki? They won't have any trouble. But where are they, blast it? I can't do a thing till I get those lists!
NIKKI: What lists, Ellery?

They hear the Inspector and Sergeant Velie of the Inspector's staff enter the apartment.

ELLERY: Dad! Velie! Did you get it?
INSPECTOR: (*Coming into the room*) Here it is, son.
SERGEANT VELIE: Just came by special courier from the War Department, Ellery.

He waves a sheaf of papers.

NIKKI: (*Sniffing*) A lot of papers! Don't tell me we have to go through a batch of stuffy reports.
VELIE: (*Grimly*) They ain't "stuffy reports", Miss Porter.
NIKKI: Then what are they?
INSPECTOR: A list of the names and home addresses of the survivors, the missing . . . and the dead of that torpedoed American ship.
ELLERY: (*Crisply*) All right, Dad, now we can get to work. We've got to question the families of every man on this list.
INSPECTOR: (*Heavily*) Yes, son.
VELIE: But, Maestro, there are thousands of names here. They stretch all the way from Maine and Florida to Oregon an' California.
ELLERY: There's no other way, Sergeant. Nikki!

NIKKI: (*Crisply*) Yes, Ellery.

ELLERY: Your job is to take these lists and arrange them by states and cities. Dad, you and Velie work out a practical traveling schedule for the four of us. We'll cover the entire country, working West.

NIKKI: But, Ellery, what do you expect to find by questioning the families of the victims?

ELLERY: Clues, Nikki——clues that will tell us how the enemy knew about our warship and where to lie in wait for it! Somewhere in these names and addresses are our suspects and the solution.

VELIE: And maybe the answer to that "Ellery Q" on that piece of Axis paper. That one gets *me.*

ELLERY: Never mind that now, Sergeant. Let's get to work!

SCENE 3: Mrs Brown's house in Richmond, Virginia. Some weeks later. The Queens, Nikki, and Sergeant Velie are welking up the path of a shabby little frame house. Nikki is consulting a list.

NIKKI: Mrs Mary-Jane Brown . . . it's this house, all right.

ELLERY: Mrs Brown. Widow. One son. Richmond, Virginia.

VELIE: We sure are coverin' territory! How many visits does this make?

NIKKI: Five hundred and forty-one, Sergeant.

VELIE: And we're still on the Eastern seaboard.

INSPECTOR: I hope we have some luck with this Mrs Brown, Ellery. I can't see that we're getting anywhere at all. Not a clue so far.

ELLERY: (*Grimly*) I told you it would be a big job, Dad.

They mount to the porch.

ELLERY: Well, Sergeant, rouse Mrs Brown.

Velie wearily rings the doorbell.

ELLERY: Mother of Harry Brown, Seaman Third Class, U S Navy.

The door opens.

ELLERY: Mrs Brown?

MRS BROWN: (*She is a faded woman of southern stock, middle-aged and work-worn.*) I'm Miz Brown.

ELLERY: Mrs Brown, we're special investigators from Washington.

MRS BROWN: Gover'ment people! Come in.

They go in and she leads the way to a dim parlor.

Ain't nothin' wrong with my son, Harry?

NIKKI: No, Mrs Brown. Your son's getting along fine in the hospital.

MRS BROWN: Thank goodness! Gave me a start . . . Mah parlor's a little messy——won't y'all set?

They thank her and sit down.

ELLERY: Your son, Harry, was wounded in a recent naval engagement, Mrs Brown——was quite a hero.

MRS BROWN: (*Proudly*) I know, suh. He's a real American.

INSPECTOR: So we're just here to talk to a hero's mother.

MRS BROWN: Harry's a wonderful boy, suh. Enlisted right off in the Wah. Proud? Why, suh, he thinks bein' an American sailuh is the finest thing theah is!

VELIE: Ain't nothin' finer, Mrs Brown.

MRS BROWN: Why, my Harry's so proud of *The Manila Bay*——that's his ship——*he* says it's the best ship in the Navy.

INSPECTOR: (*Chuckling*) That's what all the boys say, Mrs Brown.

MRS BROWN: Well, suh, it's a fact I got into an argument with Mistuh Williams a couple weeks before Christmas——

ELLERY: Who is Mr Williams, Mrs Brown?

MRS BROWN: (*Sniffing*) Yankee storekeeper——keeps the groc'ry and meat market half mile into town. He's got a boy in the Navy, too. And *he* says his *son's* ship, the *Buffalo,* is the finest in the Navy. "Izzat so?" I says. "Mah Harry's ship, *The Manila Bay,* is!" Almost came to throwin' things. Theah was a crowd aroun' the counter laughin' their heads off, that ol' fool Williams was so mad. (*Softening*) But then we sort o' patched it up, an' Mistuh Williams give me a specially fine mess o' chitlin's to show there was no hard feelin's.

NIKKI: Mrs Brown, did you ever hear your son, Harry, mention the name "Ellery Queen", or "Ellery Q"?

MRS BROWN: Beg pardon, ma'am? I don' think so . . .

ELLERY: (*Smoothly*) We needn't take up any more of Mrs Brown's time, Nikki.

NIKKI: But, Ellery——

ELLERY: Thank you, Mrs Brown. (*Quietly*) Dad. Sergeant——

MRS BROWN: But, suh, I could tell y'all lots more 'bout mah Harry——

ELLERY: I'm sure you could, Mrs Brown.

They bid Mrs Brown goodbye as they go to the door.

MRS BROWN: Tell Harry his mom's prayin' he'll get better quick, suh.

They reassure her, and go down the path.

INSPECTOR: I don't blame you for cutting that one short, son.

VELIE: Another washout.

NIKKI: Hasn't heard of Ellery Queen! We'll *never* solve the mystery of that "Ellery Q".

ELLERY: Nevertheless, gentlemen and Miss Porter, Mrs Brown has given us *our first clue* in five hundred and forty-one visits.

They look blank.

Nikki, you took notes?

NIKKI: Yes, Ellery, of everything she said, but——

VELIE: But *what* clue, Maestro?

ELLERY: Didn't you spot it, Sergeant? It's not an important clue—— it doesn't tell us much——but it encourages me to keep going. We're on the right track! Dad, who's next on our list?

INSPECTOR: Somebody in Lexington, Kentucky. Clue Number One, uh? Too much for me!

ELLERY: Let's hurry, or we'll miss our train connection. Who knows? We may find Clue Number Two in the State of Kentucky!

SCENE 4: Rev Jone's Vestry in Minneapolis. Two weeks later. The Queen group is sitting tiredly, waiting. Organ music is playing in the background, audible from the Church.

INSPECTOR: Nikki, how do we stand now? (*He yawns*)

NIKKI: No luck in Kentucky, Inspector. Or in Ohio, or in Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin. Number of states covered: twenty. People visited: 'way over a thousand. (*She yawns*) So we find ourselves in Minneapolis, Minnesota, about to question the father of Lieutenant Thomas L Jones, U S Army——(*Change of tone*)—— deceased.

INSPECTOR: Not even killed in action. Drowned on that ship the subs sank. (*He frowns*)

VELIE: If y'ask me, it's hopeless. Twelve hundred and sixty-five visits ——and one clue. In Richmond, Virginia. *He* says.

The door from the church opens, and Rev Jones appears.

VELIE: Uh-uh. Here's the Reverend.

Rev Jones is a fragile gentleman of sixty, looking as if he has recently suffered a great shock.

REV JONES: (*As he comes into the vestry*) Mr Queen? Forgive me for having kept you waiting. But my duties in the church——

ELLERY: It's quite all right, Reverend Jones. You know why we're here?

REV JONES: My sexton's told me. Won't you all sit down? (*He sighs*) It's about my son . . . and how he died in the service of his country.

VELIE: (*Muttering*) Drowned without a rat's chance.

INSPECTOR: I'm a father myself, Reverend——

NIKKI: We know how you feel.

REV JONES: Thank you . . . We were very close, Tom and I. He was so full of life——I'm afraid sometimes my parish thought Tommy was a bit *too* full of life! (*Tremulously*) God bless him.

ELLERY: (*Gently*) He wrote to you frequently, Reverend?

REV JONES: (*Brightening*) Oh yes, Mr Queen, every day! My wife

is bed-ridden, you know. Tom knew how anxious his mother was about his daily welfare——how much his letters meant to us.

He opens a drawer of his desk.

As a matter of fact, I . . . happened to keep the very last letter he ever wrote us. Dated Christmas Eve. If you wouldn't be bored——

ELLERY: I assure you, Reverend, we're very much interested in Lieutenant Jones's last letter to his parents.

REV JONES: That's kind of you, Mr Queen. I . . .

He stops, turning the pages of a letter slowly. Suddenly he chuckles.

For example, listen to this——it's a part of the letter I've repeated to many friends and parishoners. You're sure I'm not boring you?

ELLERY: (*Gently*) Quite sure, Reverend Jones.

REV JONES: (*Clearing his throat*) "You especially will appreciate this, Dad. Just today one of the boys brought out an autographed photo of Dorothy Lamour, and Shavetail Billy Green said he'd swiped it from *him,* and the other contestant——one of my special buddies in the company, Frank Winters——Frank said the h——he had, and they almost had a brawl about it."

Everybody chuckles.

"So finally *I* said: 'You both claim it——why not put it up to Old Grouchy?' (our C O). They said okay, and I had a hard time keeping a straight face, because our C O is full of surprises. Well, Old Grouch heard the case, and without batting an eye, he says: 'Gentlemen,' he says, 'you each claim possession of the autographed photo of this comely and estimable young woman,' he says, 'and since there are no other facts, I'll decide the case with absolute justice, to wit: I'll tear the photo in half——like this!'——and he rips poor Lamour right down the middle——'and give *each* of you one half. Now scram,' the C O snarls, 'and start thinking about the War, or you'll find yourselves with a couple of desk jobs while the rest of us are having fun!' You should have seen Frank's and Billy's faces . . ." (*His voice breaks*) . . . "Dad." (*Pause*)

ELLERY: (*Low*) Dad. Velie. Nikki. Let's go.

REV JONES: (*Muffled*) Oh, but really. I'm sorry. It——all came back. If you'll give me just a moment, please . . .

ELLERY: Thank you, Reverend Jones. We shan't intrude any further.

They make their adieus, leaving him at his desk, a broken old man.

NIKKI: (*Sniffling*) That was . . . such a sad letter. Ellery, you didn't even give me a chance to ask about "Ellery Q". You *never* do.

ELLERY: Never mind "Ellery Q" now, Nikki. Dad, we're in luck!
INSPECTOR: What luck?
VELIE: Yeah. So we meet Reverend Jones in Minneapolis, so he reads us Lieutenant Jones's last letter, so what have we got? The usual nothin'.
ELLERY: On the contrary, Sergeant. *We've got Clue Number Two.*
INSPECTOR: Now wait a minute, son, You mean to say that somehow the enemy got hold of that boy's yarn to his father about Dorothy Lamour's photograph?
ELLERY: (*Grimly*) I mean just that.
VELIE: But suppose they did, Maestro? So what?
ELLERY: Never mind now, Sergeant. Dad, we're really beginning to get somewhere! Nikki, who's next on our list?
NIKKI: (*Wearily*) Somebody in Laramie, Wyoming.
INSPECTOR: (*Wearily*) Westward ho!

SCENE 5: An Airplane Factory Near Los Angeles. The Queens are ushered into the executive office of the factory. The din is deafening——they can scarcely hear one another. They all look tired and discouraged.

MAN: Wait in this office, Mr Queen. I'll get her off the assembly line.

He goes out and shuts the door. The noise of production comes through faintly.

VELIE: So how do we stand now, Miss Porter?
NIKKI: We're scraping the bottom of the barrel, Sergeant.
VELIE: East, South, Middle West, Far West——Oregon, Washington, now Los Angeles, California——and whatta we got? Sore pups.
INSPECTOR: And two clues I don't understand.
NIKKI: Are you sure you weren't *dreaming* of clues in Richmond and Minneapolis, Ellery?
ELLERY: (*Impatiently*) No, no, Nikki, they were clear as crystal. But there *must* be another clue somewhere! Perhaps more than one.
INSPECTOR: Who's this we're investigating in this airplane factory?
NIKKI: A Mrs Richard K Smith of Los Angeles. She works here.

The door opens, letting in the din again, and Mrs Smith enters ——a bitter-looking girl with a smudge on her cheek.

NIKKI: Why, she's no older than I am. In overalls!
MRS SMITH: (*Abruptly, as she comes into the room*) Who's Mr Queen?
ELLERY: I am, Mrs Smith. Special investigator for the——
MRS SMITH: (*Curtly*) Yeah, I know——the foreman told me. I don't know what I can tell you. My husband's dead——died on a ship. So I got myself this job helpin' to make planes.
ELLERY: That's courageous of you, Mrs Smith.
MRS SMITH: Courageous? Hooey. I wish they'd let me shoot a machine

gun. Make it snappy, please. Every minute I'm away from my bench means I'm holdin' up a plane.

INSPECTOR: Your husband was Private Richard K Smith?

MRS SMITH: Yeah. A draftee. We met while he was in camp near San Francisco. We . . . fell for each other. (*Tensely*) Why do I have to go over all this? I wanna get back to my work!

ELLERY: I assure you it's necessary, Mrs Smith.

NIKKI: I know how you feel, Mrs Smith.

MRS SMITH: (*Bitterly*) Yeah? (*Low*) Dick didn't get leaves more'n once in a blue moon, and I couldn't afford to make the trip up to Frisco to visit him. It was . . . tough. Then——all of a sudden Dick shows up in L A——December twenty-fourth. Unexpected one-day leave, he says. I bawled like a fool. Dick said there was a rumor in camp they were shovin' off, and that's why the boys got leave . . . (*She begins to cry.*)

NIKKI: (*Low*) Do you want my handkerchief, Mrs Smith?

MRS SMITH: Th-thanks. (*Sniffs*) I had a feelin' in my bones I'd never see my Dick again. So I said: "Dick, let's get married. Now. Right away!" . . . He——he kissed me. But he said we ain't got no time——he's supposed to report back to camp in Frisco, and he just had time to make it . . .

INSPECTOR: But you did manage it, didn't you, Mrs Smith?

VELIE: You must of, since you're a missus.

MRS SMITH: (*Raptly*) Yeah. It was like a miracle. The last minute Dick gets a phone call from some officer in his camp, sayin' he was not to report back to camp but somewheres else . . .

ELLERY: Just where was he to report, Mrs Smith?

MRS SMITH: I don't know. All I know is the switch in plan gave my Dick seven hours' extra leave. So we got a lot of my friends together and told 'em all about it, and——and we got married, and then . . . Dick went away. I never even got a letter from him . . .

ELLERY: (*Gently*) We're terribly sorry, Mrs Smith.

MRS SMITH: (*Fiercely*) What am I cryin' for? I got a date with a bomber! And I hope it gets the dirty rat that got my husband! (*She strides out.*) I gotta get back . . .

She disappears in the maw of the factory, a forlorn, gallant little figure.

NIKKI: (*Sniffling*) I don't like this job, Ellery. I——want to go home.

Ellery soothes her.

INSPECTOR: We can't go home, Nikki. Not till we finish with this list of survivors and casualties from that torpedoed ship.

VELIE: (*Heavily*) Who's next, Inspector?

ELLERY: Never mind that list. We're through with it.

NIKKI: Through with it!

ELLERY: (*Crisply*) Yes. *We've just found the third——and most important*——clue. We don't need any more.

INSPECTOR: Don't need any more? But Ellery, that means——

ELLERY: Yes, Dad, now I know how the enemy found out when and where to ambush that American ship!

NIKKI: But how about the "Ellery Q", Ellery? That scrap of paper with your name on it that was found on the enemy commander?

INSPECTOR: You know what that means, too, son?

ELLERY: Oh, I knew the answer to that, Dad, a long time ago. Let's go back to Washington——and report a successful solution.

And so Ellery Queen *now knows the answer to the mystery of The Murdered Ship. Do you?*

You should be able to answer three questions correctly: (1) *What were the three clues* Ellery *spotted?* (2) *What did they mean to the enemy?* (3) *What did "Ellery Q" mean?*

The Solution

SCENE 6: The Washington Official's Office, two days later, With the Official are Ellery and Inspector Queen, Nikki, and Sergeant Velie.

OFFICIAL: So you also solved the mystery of that "Ellery Q" on the enemy sub commander's scrap of paper, Mr Queen?

Ellery laughs.

ELLERY: It wasn't my name. It isn't a name at all——the appearance of a name was a coincidence. It's a *code.*

Nikki, the Inspector, and Velie exclaim in surprise.

ELLERY: Let's take the "Q" part first. Which letter of the alphabet is "Q"?

VELIE: (*Muttering rapidly*) A, b, c, d, e, f, g, h . . .

NIKKI: The seventeenth letter, Ellery.

ELLERY: Remember that. Now one of our facts was that the ship was torpedoed at five PM. In one international system of figuring time, AM and PM are not used——the hours are numbered from one to twenty-four. By this system, the letter "Q" in the code-phrase "Ellery Q" would stand for *the seventeenth hour.* What *is* the seventeenth hour in terms of AM or PM?

INSPECTOR: Five PM——the time of the torpedoing!

ELLERY: So we know "Q" is the *time-instruction* given to the commander of the enemy submarine.

NIKKI: But what does the "Ellery" stand for?

ELLERY: Obviously, Nikki, for a word which, when grouped with "Q", or "five PM", gives a clear message. Think of it as a group of letters ——E, L, L, E, R, Y. Now note that the first and fourth letters are

the same, and the second and third. Can you think of *another* word with a similar construction?

VELIE: (*Hastily*) Who, me, Maestro?

ELLERY: Well, Sergeant, what *happened* at five PM? There was an *attack* on the ship. "Attack"——A, T, T, A, C, K!

INSPECTOR: "Ellery"——the code word for "Attack"!

ELLERY: Yes, Dad. "Ellery Q" simply meant to the sub commander: "Attack at five PM", which, combined with his other information, gave him all he had to know.

OFFICIAL: Exactly what the FBI figured out, Mr Queen, the day after you took this assignment. But how did the enemy know about the ship——that it was sailing, when, from where, and all about it?

ELLERY: I found three clues, Sir, that told me the whole tragic story. Dad, what did Mrs Brown of Richmond, Virginia, tell us?

INSPECTOR: Why, Mrs Brown said her son claimed his ship, *The Manila Bay,* was the finest in the Navy.

ELLERY: Clue Number One! *The name of the ship——The Manila Bay.* Ships in the United States Navy are named by a system. One type of American warship is named after famous American battles. Manila Bay was a famous American battle of the Spanish-American War. What type of ship is named after famous battles?

VELIE: *Aircraft carriers!*

ELLERY: An enemy agent overheard Mrs Brown's thoughtless remark that morning two weeks before Christmas——in a crowded store. When the enemy's intelligence headquarters in the United States fitted *The Manila Bay* into its other information, it was able to say: An aircraft carrier never sails alone. It is always accompanied by fighting craft, to protect it. *Therefore a large naval force* is involved.

NIKKI: But Ellery, I still don't see——

ELLERY: Ah, but what little bit of information did Reverend Jones of Minneapolis unconsciously reveal?

VELIE: That joke about the argument in camp over Dorothy Lamour's photo and how their C O settled it——

ELLERY: That yarn came from Lieutenant Jones's *last letter*—— written, therefore, just before he was shipped out of camp. Rev Jones's son knew he might never come back, so on the eve of departure he tried to give his father an important piece of information by *inventing* a bit of apparently innocent camp gossip. Can we figure out what Tom was trying to say? Oh, yes. Consider that the letter was written to *a minister of the Gospel on Christmas Eve.* Consider that it was the story of two people claiming the same cherished object and a wise arbiter who said: *"Cut it in half."*

INSPECTOR: Tom was writing a parallel to the *Bible* story! Of the wise king who ordered an infant cut in half when two women

claimed it!

ELLERY: And who was that wise king? *King Solomon.*

NIKKI: *The Solomon Islands!*

VELIE: Tom was tryin' to tell his father he was bein' shipped off to the Solomons!

ELLERY: Precisely. Reverend Jones thoughtlessly repeated it to his friends and parishioners——

OFFICIAL: (*Grimly*) And eventually it reached a spy's ears, or some Axis sympathizer, and was sent along to enemy H Q to be added to the other bits of information about *The Manila Bay* and its accompanying naval force. And the third clue, Mr Queen?

ELLERY: Nikki, what did Mrs Smith say?

NIKKI: Well, that there was a rumor Dick Smith's outfit was going overseas. The day before Christmas when he was on unexpected leave, at the last minute he got an extra seven hours' leave.

ELLERY: Or put it this way. Private Dick Smith, on unexpected leave in Los Angeles, was supposed to return to his camp near San Francisco. This trip normally takes ten hours. But because Smith was notified at the last minute to report to a *different* place, he found himself with seven hours' extra leave. In other words, his outfit had suddenly been moved from a place ten hours' travel from Los Angeles to a place only three hours' travel from Los Angeles! What important troop-embarkation point *is* three hours' travel from Los Angeles?

INSPECTOR: San Diego!

NIKKI: And everybody at the Smiths' last-minute wedding was told about it by Mrs Smith!

ELLERY: Yes, Sir, and when the enemy put all the bits and places together, along with other information that clearly tied them into a single operation, he knew: first, that a large naval force of fighting ships was involved. Second, this naval force was bound for the Solomons——and not only that, but *troops* were involved, because Tom Jones was an *Army* Officer and Private Smith was a draftee. But this meant the fighting ships were convoying *troop transports.* And to warrant such a large naval escort, it must involve a great *number* of transports——so it was an *important troop movement.* Third, the convoy was sailing from San Diego, California. When? Lieutenant Jones wrote on Christmas Eve——Private Smith got his unexpected leave the same day, December twenty-fourth——so the *time* of the sailing was the next day, Christmas Day! The enemy relayed to its subs operating in the South Pacific these facts, and they merely lay in wait along the easily estimated route until the convoy appeared——a simple nautical calculation. There it is, Sir——the whole picture, from three little bits of loose talk!

SHERLOCK HOLMES

presents

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF LADY FRANCES CARFAX

by

Denis Green

Based on the story of the same title which was first published in the American Magazine, copyrighted 1911 by The Phillips Publishing Co. and later published in a collection entitled "His Last Bow," copyrighted 1917 by George H. Doran & Co.

THE LOYALTY of the fans of Holmes and Watson is probably equalled only by the loyalty of their professional impersonators. On the screen and on the air, Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce have been playing these parts for so many years that I doubt whether they could ever be replaced to any aficionado's satisfaction.

But as this series of dramatizations went on and on, it followed inevitably that all the original Sherlock Holmes stories had been done on the air, not once but many times. Eventually it began to seem essential to create some new adventures of Sherlock Holmes.

For this purpose a couple of talented writers, named Denis Green and Bruce Taylor, were hired at a handsome salary, and Basil Holmes and Nigel Watson rode again.

The script which follows happens to be a solo by Denis Green, and is an actual adaptation of the original Conan Doyle story of the same title.

Only a natural modesty forbids me to select one of the original creations of Green and Taylor, since I must now confess that Bruce Taylor was the temporary pseudonym of Leslie Charteris.

LC

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF LADY FRANCES CARFAX

by

DENIS GREEN

The Characters

LADY CARFAX ..... she disappeared
DR WATSON ..... he hunted her
PHILIP GREEN ..... he wanted her
MARIE DEVINE ..... she left her
DR SHLESSINGER ..... he captured her
SHERLOCK HOLMES ..... he found her

WATSON: This story begins in Baker Street one March morning in the early nineteen-hundreds. Holmes and I were seated each side of a blazing fire. Holmes was puffing away at his curved pipe, while I browsed through the *Times.*

HOLMES: But why a Turkish bath, old chap?

WATSON: Because for the last few days I've been feeling rheumatic and old. A Turkish bath is what we call an alterative in medicine ——a fresh starting point——a cleanser of the system.

HOLMES: You say that you have had it because you need a change. Let me suggest that you take one. How would Switzerland do?

WATSON: Switzerland?

HOLMES: Yes, old chap. First class tickets to Lausanne, and all expenses paid on a princely scale.

WATSON: It sounds wonderful. But why?

HOLMES: I'm afraid that some evil has befallen the Lady Frances Carfax.

WATSON: Lady Carfax? Who is she?

HOLMES: Lady Carfax is the sole direct survivor of the family of the late Earl of Rufton. She was left with limited means, but with some very remarkable old Spanish jewelry of silver and curiously cut diamonds, to which she was fondly attached—— too attached, for she refused to leave them with her banker and always carried them about with her. A rather pathetic figure, Lady Carfax. Is she alive or dead? That is our problem, Watson.

WATSON: What makes you think she might be dead, Holmes?

HOLMES: She is a lady of precise habits. For years it has been her invariable custom to write every week to her old governess, a Miss

Dobney, who lives in Camberwell. It was she who consulted me. Nearly five weeks have passed without a word.

WATSON: Where was the last letter received from?

HOLMES: The Hotel Nationale at Lausanne. Lady Carfax seems to have left there and given no address. The family is anxious, and as they're exceedingly wealthy no sum will be spared if we can clear the matter up.

WATSON: Is Miss Dobney the only source of information? Surely she has other correspondents?

HOLMES: There is only one correspondent who is a sure draw, Watson. That is the bank. Single ladies must live, and their pass-books are compressed diaries. She banks at Silvester's and I've been able to glance over her account.

WATSON: And what did it disclose?

HOLMES: The last check but one paid her bill at Lausanne, but it was a large check and probably left her with cash in hand. Only one check has been drawn since.

WATSON: To whom, and where was it cashed?

HOLMES: To a Miss Marie Devine. There is nothing to show where the check was drawn. It was cashed at the *Credit Lyonnais* at Montpellier less than three weeks ago. The sum was fifty pounds.

WATSON: And who is Miss Marie Devine?

HOLMES: She was maid to Lady Carfax.

WATSON: Why did she pay her so large a sum?

HOLMES: That remains to be discovered, and I have no doubt that your researches will soon clear the matter up.

WATSON: *My* researches?

HOLMES: Of course. That was the health-giving trip to Lausanne I was referring to.

WATSON: But can't you come with me, Holmes?

HOLMES: I'm sure you'll handle the case splendidly, and if you feel at all puzzled you can always remember one thing, old chap.

WATSON: And what's that, Holmes?

HOLMES: If my humble counsel can ever be valued at so extravagant a rate as tuppence a word—it waits your disposal night and day at the end of the continental telegraph wire.

Music swells in a gay theme. As it fades . . .

We hear the ting-ting of the desk bell at Hotel Nationale at Lausanne where Dr Watson, just arrived, is trying to gain attention. At last a middle-aged gentleman of French appearance comes forward . . .

MOSER: (*With a French accent*) Monsieur? What may I do for you?

WATSON: You are the manager of the Hotel Nationale?

MOSER: That is correct, Monsieur.

WATSON: I'm Doctor Watson. I've come over from England to try and trace a Lady Carfax. Her family is very worried about her.

MOSER: A charming lady. She stay 'ere many weeks. We were desolate when she left us.

WATSON: Did she leave suddenly?

MOSER: Most abruptly. I could not understand it. She seem so happy 'ere. I thought that she would stay the season . . . and then—— at one day's notice——she leave. And she would give us no forwarding address.

WATSON: Have you any idea what made her leave so suddenly?

MOSER: I cannot be sure but I have the feeling it was the bearded man who drove her away.

WATSON: Oh? And who might the bearded man be?

MOSER: A tall Englishman. He call on Lady Carfax at the hotel. She refuse to see him and he made a great scene. I myself help to put him out, Monsieur. He was a savage! And the day after his visit . . . pouff! Lady Carfax leave.

WATSON: Hmmm. I wonder if you could tell me where I might find her maid——Marie Devine?

MOSER: Mais oui, monsieur. I have her address here . . . Un moment, s'il vous plait . . . Ah, voici . . . Marie Devine, Eleven, Rue de Trajan, Montpellier.

WATSON: Do you know if Lady Carfax had any friends near here?

MOSER: Not to my knowledge, monsieur. But I have heard her talk of friends in Lyons.

WATSON: In Lyons, eh? I'm very much obliged to you, monsieur.

A burst of music cuts the scene . . .

We are in a telegraph office where Dr Watson is sending a wire to his colleague, Sherlock Holmes.

WATSON: Am now in Lyons. Have discovered that Lady Carfax went back to England three weeks ago in the company of a Doctor Shlessinger and his wife. He is a missionary from South America. Suggest you check on him in London, and also the bearded Englishman I have told you about before. Am going to Montpellier to find out what I can from Lady Carfax's maid, Marie Devine.

A brief swell of music from which, as it fades, can be heard the clacking of telegraph keys.

For a moment we are in London. Holmes is answering the wire of Dr Watson.

HOLMES: Keep it up, dear old Watson. Do not return to England

without consulting me. Also try and get me a description of Doctor Schlessinger's left ear.

A few climbing chords of music. It ends abruptly.

We hear the sound of Watson's footsteps as he walks along the street, musing over the wire from Holmes.

WATSON: (*Muttering to himself*) Extraordinary sense of humor Holmes has . . . get me a description of Shlessinger's left ear! Never heard such nonsense . . .

His footsteps stop.

Ah . . . here we are. Eleven Rue de Trajan.

He knocks at the door. It is opened by Marie Devine, a young Frenchwoman.

MARIE: (*With a French accent*) What is it?
WATSON: I'm a friend of Lady Carfax. May I come in for a minute?
MARIE: A friend of Lady Carfax? But of course.
WATSON: Thank you.

Watson follows her into the house and closes the door.

WATSON: I'll come straight to the point, Mademoiselle Devine. I'm very worried about Lady Carfax. I thought perhaps you might be able to give me some information about her.
MARIE: But of course, monsieur. Anything I can tell you.
WATSON: First, why did you leave your mistress?
MARIE: Because I am getting married, and I could not go to England with her. She gave me fifty pounds as a wedding present.
WATSON: The manager of the hotel at Lyons told me that you left your mistress under somewhat stormy conditions.
MARIE: I'm afraid that is true, monsieur. Lady Carfax was very irritable when we were in Lyons. (*Passionately*) It is the fault of the Englishman. He is a bad man. In Lausanne I see him seize Lady Carfax by the wrist——violently——and threaten her. She was terrified of him.
WATSON: Have you seen this man since you left Lady Carfax's service?
MARIE: Mais oui, monsieur. Twice he has been to my house 'ere, but I would not let him in. Only yesterday I saw him through that window . . . (*Suddenly*) Look, monsieur! There he is now! Walking up and down outside!
WATSON: You wait here, mademoiselle——and don't be frightened.
MARIE: Be careful, monsieur!

Dr Watson runs out of the house and down to the street

where the bearded Englishman is pacing up and down in front of Marie's window . . .

WATSON: (*Breathlessly*) You're an Englishman!
GREEN: (*A man about forty-five*) What if I am?
WATSON: May I ask what your name is?
GREEN: No, you may not.
WATSON: Where is Lady Carfax?
GREEN: What in thunder's that got to do with you?
WATSON: (*Belligerently*) What have you done with her? Why have you been pursuing her? Come on, you scoundrel——answer!
GREEN: (*Viciously*) Why, you meddlesome . . .

Dr Watson has grown thoroughly excited, and a serious scuffle ensues which lasts for some minutes . . .

WATSON: Let go of me, you villain! You're choking me! Let go!

. . . until we suddenly hear the sound of footsteps running.

HOLMES: (*Disguised, and speaking in French*) Va-t'en! Va-t'en!

Holmes gives Green a hearty wallop with his cane. Green yelps.

GREEN: I'll have the police after you——both of you. That's what I'll do.

He stalks off, and we hear his footsteps receding.

WATSON: (*Breathlessly*) I'm much obliged to you, my man. He nearly strangled me. If you hadn't driven him away with that stick, I think he'd have killed me.
HOLMES: (*With a strong French accent*) Monsieur——c'est rien de tout. I am very happy to have been of service.
WATSON: Perhaps you wouldn't be offended if I give you this hundred-franc note as a token of my gratitude?
HOLMES: (*Dropping the accent*) Come, come, Watson. I think you might have made it a couple of hundred without straining your purse too much.
WATSON: Holmes!!! What on earth are you doing here——and why are you disguised as a French peasant?
HOLMES: I found that I could get away from London, so I decided to head you off. I disguised myself and sat in the cafe opposite and waited for you to appear.
WATSON: Well, I must confess, Holmes, I'm delighted to see you. Don't you think I've handled the investigation rather cleverly?
HOLMES: At least it's been a singularly consistent investigation, Watson.

I cannot at the moment recall any possible blunder which you have omitted. The total effect has been to give the alarm everywhere and yet to discover nothing. I rather think you'd better come back with me to London by the night express.

WATSON: Well really, Holmes. I don't see what I've done wrong.

HOLMES: Don't look so crestfallen, old chap. Let's go back to the hotel so I can change out of these wretched clothes and then I'll explain things to you.

A light vein of music, which fades gradually . . .

We are at the hotel, where Holmes has finished changing his clothes.

WATSON: You know, Holmes, perhaps you'd have done no better.

HOLMES: There's no 'perhaps' about it. I have done better. In the first place, a fellow lodger with you in this hotel is coming to see us. The Honourable Philip Green.

WATSON: What's he got to do with the case?

HOLMES: He is the bearded Englishman that so nearly throttled you just now.

There is a knock at the door.

HOLMES: And there he is now, unless I'm much mistaken. (*Calling*) Come in!

The door is opened and the bearded gentleman enters.

GREEN: I got your note and I came at once, Mr Holmes. But what has this man to do with the matter?

HOLMES: This is my old friend and associate, Doctor Watson.

GREEN: Doctor Watson, forgive me. I do hope I didn't hurt you.

WATSON: That's all right, sir. It seems that we were both labouring under a misapprehension.

GREEN: When you accused me of hurting Lady Carfax I'm afraid I lost my temper. Mr Holmes, I'm very confused at the moment. How in the world did you come to hear of my existence at all?

HOLMES: I am in touch with Miss Susan Dobney, Lady Carfax's old governess.

GREEN: Susan Dobney . . . I remember her well!

HOLMES: And she remembers you. It was in the days before . . . before you——ah——found it better to go to South Africa.

GREEN: I can see you know my whole story, Mr Holmes.

WATSON: Well, I don't. And I wish you'd tell it to me, sir.

GREEN: It's simple enough, Doctor Watson. I've been in love with Frances since I was a youngster. But I was pretty wild in those

days, and I got myself in a bad mess and had to leave the country. I came back last year to find that Frances was still unmarried. I flattered myself that it was because she had not forgotten me. I found her at Lausanne and tried to persuade her to marry me. She weakened, I think, but when I called next day she had left town. I traced her to Lyons, but found that she had again left. Since then I have been trying to speak to her maid.

WATSON: I'm sorry, sir. I can see that I completely misunderstood your motives.

GREEN: And I yours, Doctor Watson. But, Mr Holmes, for heaven's sake, tell me what has become of Frances.

HOLMES: That is for us to find out. What is your London address, Mr Green?

GREEN: The Langham Hotel will find me.

HOLMES: Then may I suggest that you return there and be on hand in case I should want you. I have no desire to encourage false hopes but you may rest assured that we will do our best to find Lady Carfax. I will leave you this card so that you may keep in touch with us.

The music sweeps to a brief climax and dies out . . .

Holmes and Dr Watson are at their usual abode in London.

WATSON: You know, Hōlmes, it's awfully good to be back in Baker Street again.

HOLMES: (*Distractedly*) Yes . . . I suppose so.

WATSON: What's the telegram you're reading?

HOLMES: It's one that you should have sent me. D'you remember my cabling you for a description of Doctor Shlessinger's left ear?

WATSON: Of course. But I thought you were joking.

HOLMES: Joking—with a woman's life at stake? No, Watson. However, I sent another cable to the manager of the hotel in Lyons. Here is the answer. Read it for yourself.

He hands Watson the cable.

WATSON: (*Reading*) "Jagged and torn". What does that prove?

HOLMES: It proves, my dear Watson, that we are dealing with an exceptionally astute and dangerous criminal. The Reverend Doctor Shlessinger, the supposed missionary from South America who persuaded Lady Carfax to accompany him to England, is in reality Holy Peters, one of the most unscrupulous rascals that Australia has ever produced.

WATSON: Good land!

HOLMES: His particular specialty is the beguiling of lonely ladies by playing upon their religious sympathies. The nature of his tactics suggested his identity to me, and this telegram has confirmed my

suspicions. Holy Peters, as I found from his police record, had a lacerated left ear which was a relic of some cafe brawl in Sydney.

WATSON: And Lady Carfax is in his clutches! Holmes——she may be dead, you know.

HOLMES: That's possible. At any rate we can be certain that she is being kept a prisoner somewhere and unable to get in touch with Miss Dobney and her other friends.

WATSON: She may not even be in London.

HOLMES: Also possible, though my instincts tell me that she is. But we can only take the obvious steps, Watson.

WATSON: And what are those?

HOLMES: Eat our breakfast and possess our souls in patience. After that I'll take a stroll to Scotland Yard and have a word with Inspector Lestrade.

Music. It rises to a determined pitch and fades.

The scene is the same—their flat at Mrs Hudson's on Baker Street.

WATSON: Four days gone by, Holmes, and we haven't found a trace of Doctor Shlessinger, or his wife——or poor Lady Carfax. I'm beginning to feel very pessimistic.

HOLMES: And I, old fellow, am feeling very elated.

WATSON: You are? Has something happened since I went out on my rounds this morning?

HOLMES: A great deal. A silver and diamond pendant of old Spanish design has been pawned at Bovington's, in Westminster Road. Mr Green and I went over to the shop and he identified the jewelry as belonging to Lady Carfax.

WATSON: Was the pawnbroker able to describe the person who brought it in?

HOLMES: Yes. A small, baldish man with a clerical collar. His name and address were obviously false. The pawnbroker didn't notice a deformed left ear, but I think we can safely assume it's Doctor Shlessinger. He's begun to pawn jewels, Watson. We should get him now.

WATSON: Does it mean that harm has come to Lady Carfax?

HOLMES: Not necessarily. We must hope for the best. Meanwhile, I have left Mr Green in hiding in the pawnshop. The criminal has received a fair price for the jewelry, and no questions asked. If he's in need of further ready money I think we may safely assume he'll come back to the same establishment.

We begin to hear the sound of footsteps running up the stairs, growing louder as they come nearer.

WATSON: Now who on earth is that clattering up the stairs?

The door bursts open.

WATSON: Mr Green!

HOLMES: I see you have news. Out with it, man!

GREEN: It was the wife this time. She came to the pawnbroker's only an hour ago. The pendant she brought was the mate to the other. She was tall and pale, with blond hair and ferrety eyes.

HOLMES: That's the woman——that's Mrs Peters. Did you follow her as I told you to?

GREEN: Of course I did, Mr Holmes. She walked up the Kennington Road, and I kept behind her. Presently she went into another shop ——it was an undertaker's!

WATSON: An undertaker's? I don't like the sound of that, Holmes.

HOLMES: Please continue, Mr Green.

GREEN: She was talking as I entered. 'It is late,' I heard her say. The woman behind the counter was excusing herself. 'It should have been there before now, but it took longer to make——being out of the ordinary,' she answered. The woman started to turn and I slipped out of the shop.

HOLMES: Excellent! And then?

GREEN: She came out and got into a cab. I was lucky enough to get another one and follow her. She drove to thirty-six Poulteney Square, Brixton.

WATSON: Did you see anyone?

GREEN: No. The blinds were down. I was standing there, wondering what I should do next, when a van drove up. The men got out and carried something up to the front door. Mr Holmes——it was a coffin!

HOLMES: A coffin, eh? Go on.

GREEN: My instincts were to rush in——the door had been opened to admit the men and their burden. It was the woman who opened it, and I think she caught a glimpse of me for I saw her start and then hastily close the door.

HOLMES: You have done excellent work, Mr Green. But now we can do nothing legal without a warrant to search the house. I suggest you go to Scotland Yard, explain the situation to Inspector Lestrade, and get one as speedily as possible.

GREEN: But they may murder her in the meanwhile. What could the coffin mean? Who could it be for but Lady Carfax?

HOLMES: Leave it in our hands, Mr Green. eW will do all that can be done. Get the warrant and meet us back here.

Green departs.

WATSON: He'll set the regular forces on the move, and I suppose once

again we'll be the irregulars?

HOLMES: Of course. The situation strikes me as so desperate that the most extreme measures are justified. Not a moment must be lost in getting to Poulteney Square.

A burst of excited music that ends . . .

. . . with the clip-clopping of horse's hoofs. Holmes and Watson are on their way to Poulteney Square.

WATSON: You know, Holmes, I can't help feeling that Lady Carfax is dead. How else do you account for the coffin?

HOLMES: A coffin points to orthodox burial, old chap. Had the lady been obviously murdered they would have buried her in a hole in the back garden.

The cab draws up to the curb; the sound of hoofs stops. The horse neighs.

CABBIE: This is the 'ouse, gents . . . thirty-six Poulteney Square.

They get out, and we hear the cab door close.

HOLMES: And now for a direct frontal attack. Are you armed, Watson?

WATSON: Only my stick.

They go up the steps to the entrance and knock.

HOLMES: Only your stick, eh? Well, well, we shall be strong enough. "Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just".

The door is opened by Mrs Peters.

MRS PETERS: Well, what d'you want?

HOLMES: I want to speak to Doctor Shlessinger.

MRS PETERS: No one here by that name.

HOLMES: Well, I want to see the man who lives here, whatever he may call himself. (*With a sudden grunt of exertion*) And it's no good trying to close the door, madam. As you will notice, my foot's in it.

MRS PETERS: (*Sourly*) Well, come in.

WATSON: Thank you, madam.

They go in after her, and Watson closes the door.

MRS PETERS: (*Calling*) Henry! (*Muttering*) My husband's not afraid to face any man in the world.

HOLMES: I'm glad to hear it.

MRS PETERS: Here he is now.

Peters comes into the hallway where they are. He is about fifty, soft-spoken, and gives an impression of unreliability.

PETERS: There is surely some mistake here, gentlemen.

HOLMES: There's no mistake. You are Henry Peters, of Adelaide, late the Reverend Doctor Shlessinger, of Lyons and South America. I'm as sure of that as I am that my own name is Sherlock Holmes.

PETERS: Your name doesn't frighten me, Mr Holmes. What is your business in my house?

HOLMES: I want to know what you have done with Lady Carfax whom you brought away with you from Lyons.

PETERS: (*Calmly*) I'd be very glad if *you* can tell me where the lady may be. I've a bill against her for nearly a hundred pounds—— and nothing to show for it but a few trumpery pieces of jewelry that the dealer would hardly look at. I paid her bill in Lyons and her ticket to England. Once in London she gave us the slip. You find her, Mr Holmes, and I'm your debtor.

HOLMES: I mean to find her . . . and I'm going to search this house until I do.

PETERS: Where's your warrant?

WATSON: This stick is our warrant, my good man, until the real one arrives.

PETERS: You're a couple of common burglars! Annie, fetch a policeman!

MRS PETERS: Right you are, Henry.

HOLMES: We must work fast, Watson. Our time is limited.

WATSON: If you try and stop us, Peters, you'll most certainly get hurt. Where is that coffin that was brought into your house?

PETERS: What do you want with the coffin? It's in use. There's a body in it.

HOLMES: I must see that body. Come on, Watson.

Holmes and Watson proceed into the front room.

PETERS: Come back here, if you know what's good for you!

WATSON: Look, Holmes! Look! Here's the coffin on the table in here!

HOLMES: (*After a moment*) Hmmm . . . the lid's not yet screwed on. Turn up the gas, old fellow. Now help me off with the lid.

WATSON: (*After a moment*) Good Lord! It's the body of a withered old woman——must be eighty if she's a day.

HOLMES: Thank heavens, it's not Lady Carfax.

PETERS: Blundered badly, haven't you, Mr Sherlock Holmes?

HOLMES: Who is this dead woman?

PETERS: If you must know, she is an old nurse of my wife's. Her name is Rose Spender and we found her in the Brixton Poorhouse. We brought her here, called in Doctor Horson of thirteen Firbank Villas

——mind you take the address, Mr Holmes——and had her carefully looked after. She died two days ago of senile decay and is to be buried tomorrow morning at eight o'clock. Can you pick any hole in that, Mr Holmes?

HOLMES: I'm going to search your house.

PETERS: (*Raising his voice*) Did you get a policeman, Annie?

MRS PETERS: Yes I did, Henry.

OFFICER: 'Ere, 'ere. Wot's the matter 'ere?

PETERS: These men have forced their way into my house and threatened me, officer.

OFFICER: Well, blow me down! If it ain't Mr Sherlock 'Olmes and Doctor Watson. You gentlemen know very well you can't force your way in 'ere without a warrant.

PETERS: Arrest them, officer!

OFFICER: (*Majestically*) Don't you tell me what to do. We know where to lay our 'ands on these gentlemen if we need to. (*Sotto voce*) 'Fraid you'll 'ave to leave, Mr 'Olmes.

HOLMES: Of course. Come on, Watson.

PETERS: Better luck next time, Mr Nosey Parker!

HOLMES: Thank you. And don't imagine you've seen the last of me.

They leave with the officer, and after they reach the street we hear again the sound of their footsteps on the pavement.

OFFICER: Sorry about that, sir. But the law's the law, y'know.

HOLMES: I quite understand, officer. A warrant is on its way but I wish you'd keep an eye on the place until it arrives. We're trying to trace a missing lady, and we think she's in that house.

OFFICER: I'll keep a watch, sir. Don't you worry.

HOLMES: Thank you. And now, Watson, there's work to be done.

Music rises to a crescendo, which is sustained a moment before it drops away.

In their flat on Baker Street, Watson bursts in excitedly.

WATSON: Holmes! That story about Rose Spender was true. I've just come from Brixton Poorhouse.

HOLMES: And I from Doctor Horson. He told me that he was present when the old lady died.

They hear footsteps approaching, and in a moment the door opens.

GREEN: (*Excitedly*) Here it is, Mr Holmes! I've got the warrant.

HOLMES: And just in time, too, Mr Green.

GREEN: What have you found out, Mr Holmes?

HOLMES: I haven't time to tell you now——except that I have just

learned from the undertaker that the funeral of Rose Spender is to take place tonight at seven, and not eight tomorrow morning! It's six-thirty now. Get your coat and hat, Watson——and hurry. It's life or death——and a hundred chances on death to one on life!

An excited rush of music, fading . . .

. . . into the rattle of a cab and the noise of horse's hoofs going at great speed.

WATSON: It's ten to seven now, Holmes, and we're nearly there.

GREEN: Mr Holmes, I still don't understand the connection between the burial of Rose Spender and what's happened to poor Frances.

WATSON: I must say I'm pretty much in the dark, too.

HOLMES: I can see the whole devilish plan now. The key to the whole thing lies in the remark that you heard the undertaker's wife make, Mr Green: "It took longer to make——being out of the ordinary."

The carriage stops abruptly.

HOLMES: Here we are.

WATSON: The hearse is still outside the house . . . (*Excitedly*) and look! They're bringing the coffin out now!

They scurry out of the cab.

HOLMES: Quickly! (*Shouting*) Put that coffin down, men! Put it down!

PETERS: What the devil d'you mean, Mr Holmes? Where's your warrant?

OFFICER: Yes, Mr 'Olmes. Got to have that, y'know.

HOLMES: Give it to the officer, Mr Green.

GREEN: Here you are. Here's the warrant, officer.

HOLMES: Now listen, men. A sovereign for each of you if that lid comes off in under a minute . . . That's it. Take your screwdrivers, and make them work fast! . . . Officer! Keep an eye on Mr Peters there. He seems to be leaving us.

OFFICER: Right you are, sir. (*Grunting at Peters*) No, you don't.

HOLMES: Faster, men! . . . That's good! Another! . . . And another.

GREEN: Mr Holmes, I don't know what you expect to find in that coffin. It's not a thing I like to admit, but I can't help being frightened out of my wits.

HOLMES: Courage, man. You're going to need it. Faster, men! Two sovereigns apiece for you . . . That's it . . . Now——pull. All together!

We hear them grunt with exertion.

WATSON: It's giving! It's giving!
HOLMES: Ah . . . that does it at last!
WATSON: Good Lord! Chloroform! What a stench of chloroform!
HOLMES: Never mind that. Tear the cotton wool away!
WATSON: (*After a moment*) Great Heavens!
HOLMES: Exactly! Lady Carfax——on *top* of the body of Rose Spender!
GREEN: (*Frantically*) Frances! Frances! Doctor Watson——is she . . . is she . . .?
WATSON: Give me a hand, men. We must get her out.
GREEN: Has she gone, Dr Watson? Is there a spark left? Surely we're not too late?
WATSON: She's still breathing.
GREEN: Thank Heaven! Work on her, doctor. Work on her.
HOLMES: What a devilish plan——to bury two bodies under one death certificate. That's why a special coffin was built.
WATSON: Her eyes are opening. She's going to live, Mr Green.
GREEN: Frances.
WATSON: We must get her into the house.
HOLMES: Meanwhile, the funeral may proceed. Close up the coffin again, men. The poor old woman who still lies there may go to her last resting place alone.

The music comes to a quick and triumphant climax.

WATSON: And that was the story of the disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax. It had us all worried for a bit, I can tell you, but thank heaven it ended as we hoped. Of course it took Lady Carfax a month or so to completely recover——the shock, you know. But she came around splendidly. As for the jewels, Holmes got them all back——except for a few minor pieces. All in all, I'd say the case was brought to a very satisfactory conclusion.

SUSPENSE

presents

THE NIGHT MAN

by

Lucille Fletcher

ONE OF *the most vital things about radio, as against such an equally parasitic medium as the movies, is the number of important shows which were created originally and exclusively for the air, and which claim no derivation from any previous book, play, biography, or vaudeville act.*

One of the most distinguished of these creations is Suspense. *While it is of course a thriller show, stemming from many well established traditions, it has no stock characters and no contract writers, and relies entirely on the dramatic value of individual stories to hold an audience.*

It is a one-man show only and importantly in the sense that it is homogenized by the approach and direction of one man, who conceived the show in the first place and who has guided every part of it right up to airtime ever since its debut.

This gent is a character by the name of Bill Spier, who when I last saw him was still firmly at the helm, even though masquerading behind a facade of chin-whiskers which seem a little unnecessary to me; and I am indebted to him for recommending the following script as one of his favorite productions.

LC

THE NIGHT MAN

by

LUCILLE FLETCHER

The Characters

STELLA ..... she saw a ghost
WARDEN GRAVES ..... he listened
THE NIGHT MAN ..... he sought justice
GALLAGHER ..... a gabby Irishman

Music. A dissonant chord. Then a strain of weird notes, each crying out in a different key. They rise and clash. The music fades.

We are in a penitentiary. At first there is only the sound of the great bell echoing down the corridors, low and toneless, repeating itself with tireless persistence. As the echo vanishes, we hear at a distance the click of high heels on the stone floor. They are coming closer, growing louder. They are Stella's footsteps. She is a woman in her thirties, thin and high strung.

The footsteps halt.

STELLA: Warden Graves?

GRAVES: Yes, Miss Rhodes. Sit down, won't you?

STELLA: Thank you. I hate to disturb you like this. But I've come all the way up here to see you. They wouldn't give me the information over the phone.

GRAVES: I know.

STELLA: You know what my visit is about, Warden Graves?

GRAVES: To some extent. You think one of our prisoners——Tom Nixon——has escaped.

STELLA: He *has* escaped. I'm as sure of it as——as I'm sure of sitting here now. I saw him——at large——in New York yesterday.

GRAVES: You knew Tom Nixon well, Miss Rhodes?

STELLA: Knew him! He was my mother's murderer. My mother was Mrs George Rhodes of Huntington, Long Island. She ran a boarding house there. He killed her on September 18, 1933.

GRAVES: We have all the records of the crime, Miss Rhodes——

STELLA: Tom was Mother's chief boarder for ten years. Know him! Why I sat opposite him at the dinner table from the time I was a

girl of fifteen. I knew him as well as I knew my mother. I—— I'd know him anywhere.

GRAVES: I see.

STELLA: And now he's at large. He's free. Somehow or other he's escaped this place. Maybe you're not aware of it. Maybe even his fellow prisoners aren't aware of it. But he's wormed his way out. And he's after me. (*Hysterically*) He's after me!

GRAVES: Oh——my dear young lady.

STELLA: Warden Graves——ten years ago, when Mother was found murdered, I knew it couldn't have been anyone but Tom. I testified against him. I was the chief——practically the only——witness at the trial. And when they sentenced him here for life he swore to kill me. He swore in the open court to get even with me. For ten years I've lived in deadly fear. I've watched the newspapers for prison breaks. I've moved from house to house, made few friends. He's hung over me like a shadow——even though I told myself he was locked up here, locked up here——forever. And now—— (*Hysterically*)——it's come!

GRAVES: And where exactly did you see the prisoner, Miss Rhodes?

STELLA: That's just the point. That's why I know he's after me. I saw him in my own apartment house!

GRAVES: Well!

STELLA: He has a job there——running the elevator at night. That's what makes it so horrible. I've never married, Warden Graves. I live all alone in a small three-room penthouse on the eighteenth floor. The other night, about a week ago, I came home alone from the movies. It was after midnight! The big marble lobby of my building was deserted. Ever since the war began there has been no door man on duty at night. In a far corner, near the elevator, a lone man with his back toward me was down on his hands and knees scrubbing the floor . . .

Stella's voice fades, and the scene changes to the lobby of a building in New York. Stella is just coming home. Her high heels click step by step across the marble floor. It is the only sound except the swishing brush of the night man as he scrubs the floor on his hands and knees.

STELLA: Good evening.

NIGHT MAN: (*Mumbling*) Evening.

She steps into the elevator and waits. There is a pause with only the brush of the night man swishing over the marble floor. Finally Stella rings the buzzer. Twice.

STELLA: Well, where *is* everybody? Isn't the elevator working tonight?

NIGHT MAN: You want to go up in the elevator, mum?

STELLA: Certainly.

NIGHT MAN: Be right with you.

The night man sets down his brush and shoves his pail against the wall. We hear the sound of his heavy shoes as he crosses to the elevator.

NIGHT MAN: (*His voice is hoarse but soft*) Okay, mum. What floor?

There is a click from the starter, the noise of the metal door slamming shut, and finally the purring of the machinery as the elevator rises. The sound of it fades . . . and we are back at the penitentiary where Stella is telling her story to Warden Graves.

STELLA: I was in the elevator and we had started to ascend before I really saw him. It was *Tom.* His hair had turned white and there was a horrible stoop to his shoulder, but everything about him——the crook of his head——his high, thin, bony nose——the hollow cheekbones——were all the same. And then he turned and stared at me. I could see those deadly pale cold eyes——those heavy eyebrows, still black——that familiar, quiet sarcastic mouth. He asked me what floor, and I told him the penthouse. He behaved so peculiarly. "The Penthouse?" he asked. "Where's that? On the roof?" I told him yes——on the roof——the eighteenth floor. Warden Graves, it was like being in a cage with a wild beast. He kept watching me, peering at me furtively as the elevator moved with agonizing slowness up and up past the floors. I shrank back, averting my face. The light in the car was dim. My only hope was that he did not recognize me . . .

The scene reverts to the elevator in the building where Stella lives. They have reached the eighteenth floor. The car stops, and again there is the noise of the heavy metal door rolling back.

NIGHT MAN: Here's your floor, Miss.

STELLA: (*Rushing out breathlessly*) Thank you. Good night.

NIGHT MAN: Good night.

A pause.

STELLA: Good *night.* You can go back down. I don't need anything, thank you.

NIGHT MAN: What's the matter? Forgotten your door key?

STELLA: (*Terrified*) No——*no.* It's just——it's right in my bag. I'll find it in a minute.

NIGHT MAN: Want *me* to let you in?

STELLA: Let me in? No, no. Good Lord!

NIGHT MAN: I've got pass keys to all the apartments. It's no trouble.
STELLA: No thanks. But I——no——*no!* I have it right here. Good night.

We hear the sound of Stella's key in the lock, but it takes her a while to turn it properly; she is nervous. At last the door opens and a moment later closes with a sharp slam.

A chord of music imitates the slamming door, spirals into a crescendo, and breaks.

We are back in the office of Warden Graves at the penitentiary. The Warden clears his throat . . .

GRAVES: And that was the first time you saw him?
STELLA: (*Shuddering*) Yes. I wanted to die. I didn't know where to turn.
GRAVES: And that was all he did or said?
STELLA: Yes. But it wasn't so much what he *said* as the awful resemblance and the feeling that he was only playing with me, torturing me like a cat with a mouse. Warden Graves, I didn't even have a phone. I've always been afraid to be listed in the phone book. And the only way up to that penthouse was by that one elevator. I was trapped up there——at his mercy——whenever he wanted to come.
GRAVES: What did you do?
STELLA: I spent the night crouched against the wall, with a flatiron in my hand——waiting for that key to click in my lock.
GRAVES: And the next morning?
STELLA: The next day I began to wonder if it all wasn't just a dream . . .

It is the morning after Stella's encounter with the night man. The scene is just outside her penthouse, where she is waiting for the elevator to take her down. We can hear the purring motor as the car ascends to her floor. It stops; and the metal door of the elevator rolls open.

GALLAGHER: (*Cheerful Irish voice*) Good morning, Miss Rhodes.
STELLA: (*Subdued*) Good morning, Gallagher.

The elevator door slams shut, and the motor begins its whirring sound again. We hear it in the background of their conversation.

GALLAGHER: Lovely weather we've been having. Lovely. Dry, brisk. But not too brisk. Not overcoat weather yet. No. Not overcoat weather. I was only sayin' to Foley this mornin'——
STELLA: Gallagher——
GALLAGHER: Yes, Miss Rhodes? Yes?

STELLA: Who's that new nightman running the elevator? The one who came on last night?

GALLAGHER: Oh, Foley? You mean Foley, Miss Rhodes? That's Charlie Foley. Nice old chap, ain't he? Very friendly and obliging too. Treated me to coffee this morning before I come on.

The elevator stops. They are on the ground floor. The door rolls back, and we hear Stella's footsteps starting across the marble floor of the lobby.

GALLAGHER: Good morning, Miss Rhodes.

STELLA: (*Calling back*) Good morning.

Music, beginning on a cheerful note, swells to a discord and trails off. As the last notes fade . . .

The scene again is in the office of Warden Graves.

GRAVES: (*Dryly*) Well——And so——you went back?

STELLA: I didn't want to. I spent the day hunting for another apartment. But you know wartime New York, Warden Graves. There wasn't another apartment to be had. I let myself be convinced . . . until that night when I saw him again. He took me up in the elevator, and he called me——Miss Rhodes! And now there was a cruel, sarcastic smile about his lips. The kind of smile I'd seen him give to Momma.

GRAVES: You think he recognized you, then?

STELLA: Recognized me! Warden Graves, *I* haven't changed. Perhaps I've grown a little thinner. Don't you see? He'd come there only to trap me. He'd taken that particular job——plotted——schemed. . . . It was only a question of when——*when* he was going to do it——when the axe was going to fall. He kept grinning at me as I stepped out of the elevator. I got into my apartment as fast as I could and slammed the door behind me. And then——suddenly . . .

The sharp sound of the doorbell to Stella's apartment.

STELLA: (*Shakily*) Who . . . is . . . it?

The doorbell rings again.

STELLA: (*Hysterically*) Who's——there?

We hear the click of a key in the lock. The door opens slowly. Stella shrieks.

NIGHT MAN: Oh——excuse me, Miss Rhodes. There wasn't any answer to my ring.

STELLA: (*In terror*) What do you want? What are you doing here?

NIGHT MAN: It's your laundry. They told me to put it inside the door in case you weren't home.

STELLA: (*Dazed*) My laundry? But you knew I was home. (*Wildly*) You just brought me up.

NIGHT MAN: That's right. Excuse me. I guess——I musta been thinking of something else.

STELLA: (*Uncertainly*) Yes?

NIGHT MAN: I'm sorry, Miss Rhodes. Very sorry.

STELLA: It's all right. Good night.

NIGHT MAN: It was a crazy mistake. There I was thinking you could get up here some other way. But there isn't any other way——is there?

STELLA: (*Frozen*) No.

NIGHT MAN: It's just like you were all alone up here. Alone—— on the roof.

STELLA: (*Trying to control herself*) Yes. (*Suddenly she bursts out hoarsely*) Tom! If you come any closer I'll kill you! Do you hear? I'll kill you with my bare——

She doesn't finish—the elevator buzzer is ringing.

NIGHT MAN: What was that, mum?

STELLA: (*Sobbing*) Get out! Get out——get out!

The buzzer rings again—more sharply.

NIGHT MAN: There's my buzzer. I better answer it.

We hear the heavy sound of his footsteps crossing the hall, and the metallic sound of the elevator door closing.

Music swells into a theme of relief and exhaustion. It grows to a climax . . . and dies away.

We are back at the penitentiary, in the office of Warden Graves.

GRAVES: And then what happened?

STELLA: No—— nothing.

GRAVES: He came back again that night?

STELLA: No. I haven't seen him since. I barricaded myself that night. Once it occurred to me that I might escape by running down eighteen flights of fire stairs. But the thought of meeting him in that awful gloomy darkness kept me back. And I didn't know where the fire stairs ended. Perhaps in the cellar——where I would be utterly defenseless.

GRAVES: It was too bad you didn't have a telephone.

STELLA: I got to a telephone next morning, a pay phone in the drug-store. I tried to call you here at the penitentiary.

GRAVES: That was the day I was out of town?
STELLA: Yes. I still don't see why they couldn't have told me. After all, I was giving them information.
GRAVES: It is one of our strictest regulations here, Miss Rhodes, never to discuss any of our prisoners over the telephone.
STELLA: That's what they said.
GRAVES: So you came all the way up here——in person.
STELLA: Yes.
GRAVES: And now you wish me to send someone to apprehend this man?
STELLA: I want you to bring him back, that's all. Back where he belongs!
GRAVES: Miss Rhodes——Tom Nixon doesn't need to be brought back. He's here.
STELLA: Oh no, Warden Graves. Please. I've seen him with my own eyes. Talked to him face to face. Maybe there's someone here calling himself Tom Nixon. But *he's* escaped. *He's* free. I know it.
GRAVES: Will you just step this way with me, Miss Rhodes?
STELLA: (*Wildly*) No——no! I don't want to see him! I don't want to see his cell——or——or——talk to anybody——or——
GRAVES: Tom Nixon is dead, Miss Rhodes. He's buried in the prison yard. I'd like you to see his grave.

The great bell in the tower rings out and echoes through the long bare corriders. The echoes swell and fade . . . swell and fade . . .

A deep discordant theme of music clashes with the ringing bell, rises to a cold weird chord, and breaks.

GRAVES: This is a photograph taken of him just a week before he died. You see, he wasted away quite a bit. He was in the infirmary all the last year. Became very religious too, toward the end. Spent a good deal of his time praying.
STELLA: Praying!
GRAVES: Yes. All the fight seemed to go out of him as soon as he knew he was seriously ill. But you'd say this was his picture, wouldn't you, Miss Rhodes?
STELLA. Yes. It's——Tom all right.
GRAVES: And these little personal belongings. Ordinarily we turn these over to the family, but in Tom's case——well, there wasn't much family. You'd recognize these as his?
STELLA: (*Hesitantly*) Yes. I don't know them all, but——that gold watch. He used to wear it every Sunday at Momma's. (*She shudders*)
GRAVES: He wrote a couple of notes before he died to a fellow-

prisoner and to the prison chaplain. You remember his handwriting?

STELLA: Yes. This seems to be it.

GRAVES: Well, Miss Rhodes? Feel a little better about your elevator operator now?

STELLA: You must think I'm a fool——an awful fool.

GRAVES: Not at all.

STELLA: But the likeness was so extraordinary. It was almost like seeing——a ghost.

GRAVES: A ghost! (*He laughs heartily*) Come, come, Miss Rhodes. Snap out of it. Now that you've gotten all this off your chest, isn't it perfectly obvious? That poor night man's done nothing or said nothing to you at all out of the ordinary. It's only that——well——you seem to be the victim of some kind of guilt complex.

STELLA: *Guilt* complex! I'm not guilty of anything!

GRAVES: What I mean is——Tom has been on your mind now for ten years. You testified against him, he threatened you. Gradually, you see him everywhere.

STELLA: No——no. Only this once. Only these last few nights.

GRAVES: All right. But now you know the truth. That should clear your fears forever. Tom's dead and buried. He can't do you any harm again.

Train whistle. And the sound of train wheels over the rails, with the same monotonous timing as a clock. It fades ——and we hear the motor of a taxi coming to a stop. The car door opens and slams shut. After a moment, the sound of high heels on a marble floor. It is the lobby of the building where Stella lives. Her interview with Warden Graves is over. She is home again.

At the elevator her footsteps stop, and we hear the sound of the buzzer as she rings, the purr of the motor while the car descends to the lobby. And then the heavy metallic sound of the elevator door rolling open.

STELLA: Good evening, Charles.

NIGHT MAN: Evening, mum.

STELLA: I have some bags here, Charles. Will you help me with them please?

NIGHT MAN: Okay.

Dull sounds of suitcases set down on the wooden floor of the elevator.

NIGHT MAN: That all, mum?

STELLA: Yes, thank you. Here——this is for you, Charles.

NIGHT MAN: No, thanks, mum. I never take tips.

We hear the elevator door closing, but the car does not start.

STELLA: It's all right. I——I'd *like* you to have it. I'm sure the superintendent wouldn't mind.
NIGHT MAN: The superintendent hasn't anything to do with it.

Stella laughs nervously. Still the elevator has not moved.

STELLA: (*After a pause*) Well? Aren't we going to start?
NIGHT MAN: (*Quietly*) Yeah. In a minute.

A pause. The silence is full of emotion.

NIGHT MAN: (*Casually, but with a tinge of insolence*) Been out of town?
STELLA: Why——why——yes. I have.
NIGHT MAN: You were gone quite a while.
STELLA: (*Nervously*) I was——in the country, visiting a friend.

The night man steps on the starter. We hear the click. At last the elevator moves upward, with that same low purring or the machinery. Nervously, Stella tries to make conversation . . .

STELLA: It's beautiful weather out there. The leaves are beautiful.
NIGHT MAN: I wouldn't know.
STELLA: You live in the city, Charles?
NIGHT MAN: Of course. And by the way——my name's *not* Charles.

Suddenly the elevator stops. There is silence. The door does not open. Stella waits a moment. Finally she says, as casually as possible under the strain——

STELLA: Well——guess this must be my floor.
NIGHT MAN: No. It's not.
STELLA: Then why are we stopping?
NIGHT MAN: The elevator's stuck. Power's been cut off.
STELLA: Cut——off?
NIGHT MAN: Uh huh.
STELLA. But how could that happen? It's never happened before as long as I've lived here!
NIGHT MAN: Yeah? Well, sooner or later——I guess it had to happen.
STELLA: (*Sobbing*) But what are we going to do? What are we going to *do?*
NIGHT MAN: Wait.
STELLA: Wait?
NIGHT MAN: Wait until somebody comes along downstairs and finds

the elevator's stuck and then rings up the superintendent.

STELLA: But——that might be hours!

NIGHT MAN: Sure.

STELLA: *No!*

Her voice is hysterical. There is the sound of thumping and of metal rattling: Stella is beating on the door of the elevator with her fists.

STELLA: (*Yelling*) Help! Help! Somebody! Help! Help!

Her voice sounds smothered in the small space of the elevator.

NIGHT MAN: You're wasting your time.

STELLA: (*Gasping*) Oh.

NIGHT MAN: Most of the people are in bed by now. This air shaft's thick——isolated from the apartments. Nobody's down in the basement. The cellar help goes off at midnight. And there won't be many passengers ringing for an elevator this time of night.

STELLA: (*Her voice trembles*) You seem——awfully sure——

NIGHT MAN: Why not? (*A pause*) Cigarette?

STELLA: No, thanks. Do you think it's safe to smoke in here?

NIGHT MAN: Sure. And supposin' it isn't. What's the difference? Have one. It'll soothe your nerves.

STELLA: N—no thanks. The air's so close.

NIGHT MAN: Jumpy, ain't you?

STELLA: No. I suppose——really——there's nothing to be afraid of. Sooner or later they'll come.

NIGHT MAN: Oh sure. Eventually.

STELLA: It's just that——this waiting——and all these mirrors and being stuck——

NIGHT MAN: You're not jumpy on account of *me?*

STELLA: You? (*She tries to laugh*) Oh no——no. Of course not.

NIGHT MAN: (*Slowly*) But you were kind of jumpy with me——the other night, weren't you?

STELLA: The other night?

NIGHT MAN: When I came into your apartment unexpectedly.

STELLA: Oh——*that.* That was a——mistake.

NIGHT MAN: A mistake?

STELLA: I——just thought you were someone else. A——a friend of mine——someone I've always been afraid of.

NIGHT MAN: Oh?

STELLA: Not——now I've learned it couldn't be you, because this friend's dead. Dead and buried.

NIGHT MAN: (*Quietly*) Dead and buried.

STELLA: Yes.

NIGHT MAN: What was his name? Maybe I know him.

There is a faint click.

STELLA: (*Screams*) Oh. What's that?

NIGHT MAN: (*Calmly*) Only the lights. I knew they'd give out sooner or later.

STELLA: Oh no! No! They can't . . . they——(*In terror*) I can't stay here alone in the dark——with you!

NIGHT MAN: So you *are* jumpy with me?

STELLA: No! No!

NIGHT MAN: I thought you said this guy was dead and buried.

STELLA: (*Wildly*) He is. He is. I saw his grave——his——

NIGHT MAN: Then why are you screaming like that?

STELLA: I——I'm not screaming! (*Trying to control herself*) Only it's so dark in here——so close and——and creepy——and——

NIGHT MAN: What did you do to this friend——that makes you so jumpy?

STELLA: Do? Do? To him? (*Wildly*) Nothing. I didn't do a thing.

NIGHT MAN: No?

STELLA: It was he——he threatened me. (*Sharply*) He was a murderer. He killed my Mother in cold blood——ten years ago. He was our boarder for ten years . . . and one afternoon——*Don't* move! (*Screams out*) *Don't move!*

NIGHT MAN: (*Quietly*) I'm not moving.

STELLA: One afternoon I came home, and there was Mother—lying on the floor——with her throat——*No! No!* Where are you?

NIGHT MAN: (*Quietly*) Go on.

STELLA: No. No. I can't stand it. I can't stand it. *Tom!* (*Hoarsely*) It's you, Tom——isn't it? *You?*

NIGHT MAN: I thought you said your friend was dead and buried.

STELLA: Stop playing with me. Stop torturing me! Tell me the truth. You escaped, didn't you? You didn't die! And it was someone else——someone else's grave——just as I thought. You escaped and found me here!

She breaks off. There is silence . . . only silence. At last——

STELLA: Answer me. *Tom!* Where are you? I can't see you. I can't ——(*She screams*) No, no, Tom! No! I didn't mean it. I didn't. I didn't mean to send you there. I——it was only because I loved you Tom——loved you blindly, passionately for years——and *hated* Momma——and hated you for loving her. It was only to get revenge on you both that I killed her and——and framed you. (*She sobs*) . . . Momma was so *cruel* to me, Tom. She kept me down and made me wash all the dishes and *drudge* in that horrible boarding house. She treated me like a slave and all the time——

flaunting you in my face. If you'd spoken one kind word to me, Tom——at the trial——one word to let me know you loved me.

There is a buzzing sound. It is the signal from below; somebody is ringing for the elevator. Stella stops weeping and listens . . . Another buzz.

STELLA: (*In a harsh whisper*) You're going to kill me. Aren't you, Tom?

For a moment, silence.

Then the buzzer rings again. We hear the sound of the starter and the elevator begins to move.

STELLA: (*Screaming*) No! No, Tom——I don't want to die. I don't want to die!

Music breaks out in a clashing chord, and fades.

The elevator stops. The purring machinery is silent. But the door does not open yet . . .

NIGHT MAN: (*Quietly*) Here's the lobby, mum. You can get out here, or I'll take you back up to the penthouse as soon as we've picked up the other passenger.

STELLA: (*Dazed*) The——lobby? You brought me down?

NIGHT MAN: Yes, mum.

STELLA: You're not going to kill me? I'm——*free?*

NIGHT MAN: Yes, mum.

STELLA: (*With wild relief*) It was all just a crazy illusion. A——a nightmare, because the power went off and——and you looked so much like——Tom Nixon. Oh, forgive me. Please forgive me——for being so absurd.

NIGHT MAN: It's okay, mum.

STELLA: And you'll forget about those silly things I said? Won't you? I didn't mean them. It was just because I was beside myself.

NIGHT MAN: What silly things, mum?

STELLA: Those silly things about——about my mother and——and Tom. Here, this is for you.

There is a slight sound—like the crumpling of paper money.

STELLA: No, no, I insist this time. I insist.

NIGHT MAN: I'm sorry, mum. But I'm afraid I never accept tips.

STELLA: Oh. But——

NIGHT MAN: (*Slowly*) Particularly from people who've framed my ——twin brother, Tom.

The elevator door rolls back with that same metallic noise.

NIGHT MAN: Good evening, Warden Graves.

GRAVES: Good evening, Lieutenant Nixon. Well done.

CRIME DOCTOR

presents

THE STOLEN REMBRANDT

by

Max Marcin

MORE YEARS *ago than I care to remember, when for the first time I was a lost writer at the Paramount Studios in Hollywood, I became friends in adversity with another equally lost writer whose name was Marcus Goodrich.*

Marcus, who had spent a lot of time in Mexico, had been obligated on that account to work on a screen play about bullfighting——which will always be a thankless assignment in Hollywood so long as the SPCA is in a position to turn on the heat, as anyone but a movie executive would have known before he started.

Marcus and I, being both fanatic devotees of the corrida, *found much consolation in railing against the producer who was charged with translating this ineffable epic into terms which would be acceptable to every squeamish pressure group from coast to coast.*

The name of this producer was Max Marcin.

Marcus survived this ordeal to become the author of a best-seller entitled Deborah, *which the more cultured of you have undoubtedly read; I have done all right too, thank you.*

In the accrued mellowness of these later years, I now have to include Max Marcin in our exclusive society. I hereby take back all the rude things I once thought about him. I now realize that, like Marcus and myself, he was only another victim of Hollywood in those days.

Because for many years now he has been writing, directing, and producing the Crime Doctor, *a radio show which ranks with the highest of the one-man radio operations, as I think can be verified by a perusal of the following sample script.*

LC

THE STOLEN REMBRANDT

by

MAX MARCIN

The Characters

LEONA ..... *a worried wife*
EDGAR ..... *an auctioneer*
ARTY ..... *an art expert*
HANS, FRITZ ..... *sinister characters*
MARIAN ..... *a gambler*
DR ORDWAY ..... *the CRIME DOCTOR*

Conflicting strains of music—themes in a minor key—climbing and clashing to a pitch. The music changes into a simple melody and dies away.

We are in the office of Dr Ordway as Leona Pierson comes in. She is in her late forties and we can tell that she comes from a background of few advantages. She looks at the Doctor a moment before taking a seat across the desk from him.

LEONA: Don't you remember me, Dr Ordway? I'm Mrs Leona Pierson.

DR ORDWAY: You do look vaguely familiar to me, Mrs Pierson. Were you ever before me when I was chairman of the Parole Board?

LEONA: I should say not.

DR ORDWAY: Well, where have I seen you?

LEONA: Where you bought them two vases you got on the mantel there. In my husband's auction rooms.

DR ORDWAY: Oh, yes, yes.

LEONA: As soon as you gave me your name——you remember now——I called my husband over and said, "Edgar, this is the Crime Doctor what bought the vases."

DR ORDWAY: Yes, I saw them displayed in the window and liked them well enough to bid on them. They fit in very nicely here, don't you think?

LEONA: You could get a better price for them today, if you want to send them back and let my husband put 'em up again.

DR ORDWAY: No, thank you. How is Mr Pierson?

LEONA: Terrible, Dr Ordway. He's terrible. You wouldn't recognize him, he's faded away so much.

DR ORDWAY: What's wrong with him?

LEONA: He's got a broken heart, poor Edgar. That's what I come to see you about.

DR ORDWAY: Well, I'm not a heart specialist.

LEONA: No, but you could do something for him. He's grieving away his life and I thought maybe if you talked to him, like the way you talk to crooks when you want them to go straight——you know what I mean. You give him that business.

DR ORDWAY: Really, I don't know what you mean.

LEONA: Regular doctors is no good for him. He's been to three of them already. What he needs is some kind of mumbo-jumbo routine——somebody to talk him out of what he's talked himself into. Then he might get better.

DR ORDWAY: Well, just what is it that he's talked himself into?

LEONA: It started about two months ago. There was a little art dealer over on the East Side by the name of Henry Stein. Maybe you read about him. He got burned to death in a fire.

DR ORDWAY: Yes, I remember the case.

LEONA: Well, his widow, Mrs Stein, sends the stuff what was rescued from the fire over to my husband's place to be auctioned off. Among the junk was about twenty paintings. They was all covered with dirt. I was helping Edgar clean them up when all of a sudden he holds one of them up and says to me: "Hey, Leona, Look! Look at this painting."

The scene changes. Dr Ordway's office fades. We are in the shop of Edgar Pierson, where he is holding up a painting for his wife to look at.

LEONA: Yeah, I see it.

EDGAR: Look at it close.

LEONA: I wouldn't want it in my house. A guy with a glass in his hand. He looks like a booze-hound. Look at his nose.

EDGAR: Never mind his nose. Look at the name signed to the painting.

LEONA: I can see it now. (*She spells out the letters*) R-e-m-b-r-a-n-d-t. H Van R-i-j-n. Van Rijn——whoever heard of him?

EDGAR: That was Rembrandt's full name. If this picture is genuine . . .

LEONA: If it is, what would it be doing in Mr Stein's place?

EDGAR: You never can tell where a famous painting will show up. I'm going to call up Arty Sproull and have him look at it. Arty's an expert and he'll tell me in a minute.

LEONA: Suppose it is genuine, it don't belong to you. You still got to put it up at auction.

EDGAR: Darling, there's always ways of handling these things.

The scene fades.

Music begins softly and builds on a suspenseful note. At the climax the music breaks; the theme is shattered——and dies out.

The scene again is Edgar's shop. Arty Sproull is just coming in from the sunlight outside, and his footsteps make a dull sound in the musty room. Edgar is setting a painting up against the counter for him to see.

ARTY: Is this what you brought me over here to look at, Edgar?
EDGAR: Yes, Arty. You're an expert on paintings.
LEONA: Just because the guy signed his first name as Rembrandt, Edgar thinks it might be the famous painter.
ARTY: I should think, Mrs Pierson, after running an auction room as long as you and your husband have, you'd recognize as poor a copy as this is.
LEONA: I told Edgar if it was any good it wouldn't have been lying around in Henry Stein's little art store.
ARTY: Well, I have no more time to waste on this kind of junk.
EDGAR: You ain't sore, are you, Arty?
ARTY: No, I'm not sore. Glad to do you a favor any time, Edgar. If you have anything else here that you think might interest me——
EDGAR: Not in this lot. I'll be glad to get it all out of the place.

Music—light and quick. The melody is not cheerful; it is frothy, and fades away like foam.

In Edgar's shop, the day of the auction. We hear the murmur of low voices in the background; the room is full of people.

EDGAR: This painting, ladies and gentlemen, is signed Rembrandt. Maybe it's genuine, maybe it ain't. I guarantee nothing. You buy what you see as you see it. Now——who'll offer me ten thousand dollars for this fine piece of art? (*There is general laughter*) All right, who'll offer a thousand? (*More laughter*) Will anybody offer a hundred?
VOICE: Five dollars!
EDGAR: Mister, you couldn't buy the frame for twenty-five. Five dollars! That wouldn't pay for the food the artist ate while painting it. Who'll say ten dollars?
MARIAN: Ten dollars.
EDGAR: I have ten dollars bid. Who'll say twenty?
VOICE: Eleven dollars!
MARIAN: Thirteen dollars.
VOICE: Fifteen.
MARIAN: Sixteen.

EDGAR: I have sixteen dollars bid for this fine painting. Honest, ladies and gentlemen, my heart bleeds for the poor artist. The price is an insult to his talent——even if his name ain't Rembrandt. Do I hear any further offers?

HANS: (*Slight German accent*) Five hundred!

EDGAR: F——f——five hundred! I am offered five hundred. Five hundred dollars! Ladies and gentlemen, it is signed Rembrandt. If it's genuine it's worth five hundred thousand dollars. If it ain't genuine then it ain't worth——er, ahem——yes, it is worth five hundred. Any other offers? It's going at five hundred. Five hundred once——twice——

MARIAN: One thousand!

EDGAR: Thank you, young lady. One thousand dollars I am bid. One thousand. Any other offers? One thousand——once——twice——third and last time. Sold to that lady on the aisle for one thousand dollars!

There are mumblings from all sides of the audience. Everyone is surprised, and we feel a repressed tension in their murmurs.

Out of the excitement rises a strain of music, soft and first, growing louder, and finally destroying all other sounds. It fades again into a thin strain and dies away.

A door is opened. Marian Holden comes into the room where Arty has been waiting for her.

MARIAN: Well, Arty, I got the painting.

ARTY: Come in, Marian.

The door closes.

ARTY: How much did you get it for?

MARIAN: (*Coming into the room*) A thousand dollars. I almost got it for sixteen, but somebody with a German accent started bidding it up.

ARTY: Where's the painting?

MARIAN: I put it away in a nice safe place.

ARTY: I told you to bring it up here.

MARIAN: Arty, that picture wouldn't by any chance be a genuine Rembrandt?

ARTY: That's none of your business. I sent you over there to buy it for *me*. You paid for it with my money.

MARIAN: You're wrong, Arty. I drew the money out of my personal bank account. Here's the money you gave me.

ARTY: What is this, Marian? What are you up to?

MARIAN: Look, Arty, I paid for the picture and the bill of sale is

in my name. I'll talk turkey to you after I find out something more about the painting.

Music—exploding in angry discord. It continues a short while in disharmony and trails off.

A doorbell rings. Fritz, who has been waiting for Hans to come back from the auction, hurries to answer it. We hear his quick footsteps—and the door opening.

FRITZ: (*Slight German accent*) Where have you been, Hans? Where's the painting?

HANS: (*Slight German accent, as before*) I didn't get it. A woman bid a thousand dollars. I didn't have any more money. I couldn't go any higher.

FRITZ: Who is the woman?

HANS: I followed her to her home after she left the auction.

FRITZ: You should have bid more than a thousand. Even if we didn't have the money, we could raise it.

HANS: From the way she was bidding, I could tell she was going to outbid me no matter what I offered.

FRITZ: Hans, we're going to get that painting.

The music swells. The theme is ominous like a threat. Rising to a high pitch, it reaches a climax and clashes to an abrupt end.

Footsteps are running across a musty wooden floor. We are in the shop of Edgar Pierson, where Leona is rushing toward him——with a newspaper in her hand.

LEONA: Edgar! Edgar! Will you look at this!

EDGAR: Look at what, dear?

LEONA: The newspaper. Here! That headline——there——on the second page.

EDGAR: This?

LEONA: Yeah. Read it.

EDGAR: (*Reading*) "Art expert has woman arrested over purchase of valuable Rembrandt, claims she acted as his agent in purchase and is illegally retaining it. Arty Sproull, noted art expert and dealer——"

LEONA: Your friend Arty!

EDGAR: (*Groans*) Oh, the crook! The dirty rotten crook! A fortune! A quarter of a million dollars! Slipped right through my hands! I'll get him for this. That's what you get for trusting a friend. That's what you get every time.

Edgar's voice fades in the distance, and the scene changes. It is once more Dr Ordway's office where Leona has been telling him the story of all that has happened so far.

LEONA: That's the way he carried on, Dr Ordway. I never saw a man work himself up like he did. He screamed, he walked up and down tearing his hair, and then——all of a sudden he fainted dead away. The next day a detective came to the store and asked me and my husband a lot of questions about the German who bid on the painting. We wouldn't tell him nothing unless he told us what he was after. He said they were trailing the people who were mixed up in the fire where Mr Stein got burned to death.

DR ORDWAY: Oh, yes. Tell me, did the detective tell you anything more that was overheard between the two Germans?

LEONA: No. I told you all he said.

DR ORDWAY: I was on the case with Inspector Ross the day of the fire. We were never satisfied that Mr Stein's death was accidental. But we were never able to establish a motive for the crime. It's possible that that painting had something to do with it.

LEONA: I don't care about the painting, Dr Ordway. I'm only worried about my husband. He's getting worse all the time. Now he goes around mumbling to himself. He hardly eats anything. He don't take no interest in his work. Please, Dr Ordway, ain't there something you can do to bring him out of it?

DR ORDWAY: Yes, I think there is something I can do.

A chord of music strikes the end of the scene. The theme is firm and decisive, swelling to a broad melody . . . and fading as . . .

The telephone rings. The scene is Arty's apartment. We hear his footsteps as he goes to answer the phone and then a click as he picks up the receiver.

ARTY: Yes?

MARIAN: (*At the other end of the wire*) Arty, this is Marian.

ARTY: You got a nerve to call me up.

MARIAN: Listen, smart aleck! You did a fine job having me arrested and getting all that publicity. I've just been served with papers.

ARTY: What papers?

MARIAN: That painting was stolen by the Germans from the museum in Brussels. The Belgian representative has put in a claim for it.

The music bursts out in a fast tempo. It scatters itself in disorder, and ends at last on a shrill chord. Before the last note has quite faded away, we hear Hans' frightened voice . . .

HANS: Fritz! Fritz! Have you seen the newspaper?

FRITZ: Don't tell me something more has happened to Germany.

HANS: No, Fritz, but something's going to happen to us if we get caught. Belgium has filed a claim for the Rembrandt.

FRITZ: All right, but filing a claim and getting it is two different things.

HANS: You are not going to make a fight for it?
FRITZ: That, stupid, I am not. The painting will disappear again.

Music. Three grim chords. Then a spiral of notes down the keyboard into a deep and throbbing climax.

The doorbell rings. Footsteps across the floor. We are in Marian's apartment. The footsteps stop; she opens the door.

MARIAN: Yes, what is it?
HANS: You do not recognize me, Miss Holden?
MARIAN: Oh——er——aren't you the man who bid against me for the painting?
HANS: Yes. May I come in?
MARIAN: Come in.
HANS: Come, Fritz:

We hear their footsteps as they enter, and the door as it closes behind them.

HANS: My friend, Fritz, and I have come for the painting.
MARIAN: (*Laughing*) Do you have a claim on it, too?
HANS: Indirectly——yes.
MARIAN: Well, you'll have to fight it out in the courts. I have two court orders already restraining me from disposing of it.
FRITZ: We will not waste time, Miss Holden. We know the painting is in this apartment. We intend to take it.
MARIAN: I paid a thousand dollars at the auction——
HANS: Yes, I know. We are prepared to pay you back the thousand dollars——provided you wait until ten minutes after we have left before calling the police and notifying them that you gave it up at the point of a gun.
FRITZ: You will be telling them the truth, because I shall keep my gun ready until we get the painting.
MARIAN: Have you got the thousand dollars with you?
HANS: You will receive it after we are certain that you co-operated with us.
FRITZ: There will be an additional thousand dollars for you if you will also give the police an incorrect description of us.
MARIAN: I see that I'm in no position to haggle with you.
FRITZ: That would be useless. Now, where is the painting?
MARIAN: I may as well tell you because you'll find it anyhow. It's in the closet over there, in the large suitcase.
FRITZ: Get it, Hans.
HANS: I will.

There is the sound of his footsteps crossing the room and the sound of the closet door as he opens it.

HANS: The big suitcase. Here.

Hans grunts while he pulls the suitcase out and sets it on the floor in the room.

FRITZ: Open it.
HANS: Yes, Fritz.

We hear the lock click, and the suitcase opens.

HANS: Here it is.
FRITZ: Now please understand, Miss Holden, you have everything to lose and nothing to gain by not co-operating with us.
MARIAN: You send me the money and I won't make any trouble.
FRITZ: Very well. Come, Hans.

Suddenly the door opens, and three men come into the room.

OFFICER: Where are you going with that suitcase?
FRITZ: Who are you?
MARIAN: What were you doing outside my door?
OFFICER: We're police officers.

Music breaks out on a firm theme and swells to a dramatic crescendo. As it dies away we hear the angry voice of Marian . . .

MARIAN: What's the idea, Inspector, dragging me down here to police headquarters. These two men took the painting at the point of a gun.
FRITZ: That is not true, Inspector.
INSPECTOR: Look, all of you! My men overheard every word that was said in this lady's apartment. However, I'm not interested in who is the rightful owner of the picture. Dr Ordway here and I are investigating the death of Mr Stein.
FRITZ: You and Dr Ordway questioned me at the time of the fire. Just because I happened to be in the store at the time——
INSPECTOR: Yes, Fritz, go on.
FRITZ: I told you all I knew.
DR ORDWAY: You didn't tell us, Fritz, that you knew anything about a valuable Rembrandt in the place.
FRITZ: I didn't know anything about it till I read about the litigation between this lady, Miss Holden, and the man who sent her to buy it at the auction.
MARIAN: That isn't what he and his friend Hans told me.
HANS: We made up that story, Miss Holden.
FRITZ: That is true, Dr Ordway.
DR ORDWAY: If you didn't know about the painting, Fritz, what were you doing in Mr Stein's store at the time of the fire?
FRITZ: I have told you, over and over again——I knew him from Germany. I just dropped in to say hello to him.

DR ORDWAY: Where was Hans while you were in the store?
FRITZ: That I do not know. Maybe Hans can tell you.
HANS: I cannot tell you just where I was two months ago. But I do know I was never near the store.
DR ORDWAY: How long have you been in this country?
HANS: I have lived here ten years. I am a citizen.
DR ORDWAY: You, Fritz——how long have you lived here?
FRITZ: Hans and I came over on the same boat. I am a citizen too.
DR ORDWAY: But you both maintained connections with high officials in Germany.
HANS: I have no friends among the high German officials.
FRITZ: I have never had any correspondence with anyone except my relations in Germany.
INSPECTOR: Now, Hans——
HANS: Yes, Inspector.
INSPECTOR: If you and Fritz didn't know about the Rembrandt, how did it happen that you were at the auction bidding on it?
HANS: I just happened to look in at the auction room——just out of curiosity. Seeing the Rembrandt was just accidental.
INSPECTOR: Just as accidental as Fritz's being in Mr Stein's place at the time of the fire!
FRITZ: The fire was an accident. I heard the medical examiner say so.
INSPECTOR: You also heard him say that Mr Stein's skull had been fractured either through striking his head against the edge of a chair, or something falling on him.
FRITZ: Everything was falling from the shelves after the fire started.
INSPECTOR: Just how did it start?
FRITZ: Must I go all over that again?
INSPECTOR: I'm afraid you must.
FRITZ: Mr Stein lit a cigar while he was talking to me. He threw the match into the waste basket. It must have been still lit. The paper in the basket caught fire and in a moment, before I knew it, pieces of material on a shelf also were burning. Mr Stein tried to smother the fire with a big cloth he grabbed.
INSPECTOR: What did you do?
FRITZ: I ran into the back room to get a bucket of water. I couldn't find any bucket. When I ran back into the store, the whole place was on fire. I had to climb out the back window and call for help.
INSPECTOR: You were there when the medical examiner arrived.
FRITZ: Yes, and I heard him say the body was a mass of burns and dry blisters.
INSPECTOR: You also heard him say Mr Stein suffered a fracture of the skull.
FRITZ: Mr Stein was lying on the floor when the firemen came. He

could have fractured his skull while falling.

DR ORDWAY: Now, Fritz, you were the last person to see Mr Stein alive.

FRITZ: What has that got to do with me?

DR ORDWAY: Just this. If Mr Stein didn't die as a result of the fire, but because of a fractured skull, nobody but you could have delivered the death blow.

FRITZ: He couldn't have set fire to the place after he was dead.

DR ORDWAY: No. But you could have.

FRITZ: Why should I do that? Why should I want to kill Mr Stein?

DR ORDWAY: Because he refused to hand over the Rembrandt.

FRITZ: If I went there for the painting, do you think I would have left it there and taken a chance it might be destroyed in the fire?

DR ORDWAY: You didn't know that Mr Stein's workshop was in the basement of the building. You struck Mr Stein on the head and left him lying dead on the floor. Then you searched for the painting but couldn't find it. To cover your crime, you set fire to the place.

FRITZ: You can't prove anything like that.

DR ORDWAY: On the contrary, there is one piece of evidence in this case that establishes beyond the shadow of a doubt that Mr Stein's death was a clear case of murder.

FRITZ: Dr Ordway, if you are trying to convince the Inspector that I killed Mr Stein——

INSPECTOR: Dr Ordway doesn't have to convince me, Fritz. I knew from the first that you had killed Mr Stein. That's why I had you kept under constant surveillance until we could establish the motive for the crime.

FRITZ: I told the truth about how it happened.

DR ORDWAY: No, you didn't, Fritz, and the Inspector and I knew all the time that Mr Stein was dead before the fire was started.

FRITZ: How could you know that? You were not there. I was the only witness who saw what happened.

DR ORDWAY: I told you there was a piece of evidence that contradicts your story. That evidence is the report of the medical examiner, which showed conclusively that the blisters on Mr Stein's body were all dry. If he were alive at the time of the fire, and had been burned to death, the skin would have shown water blisters, not dry ones.

FRITZ: Inspector, if you will——

INSPECTOR: Hold it, Fritz. It's my duty to warn you that anything you say may be used against you, because I'm holding you on suspicion of murder, and your friend Hans on suspicion of being an accessory.

Music. Majestic and triumphant. It swells to a full and harmonious climax. The melody is sustained a brief while and dies away.

CALLING ALL CARS

presents

THE SAN QUENTIN PRISON BREAK

by

William N. Robson

AS A retired newspaper man, I get more personal satisfaction from this script than from anything of its kind in radio.

At the time of the San Quentin prison break (which actually happened) Bill Robson was writing and producing the Calling All Cars *show. When the news came through on the wire he was asked whether he could put on a dramatization of the story on exactly one hour and twenty-five minutes' notice.*

This was the kind of challenge to which Bill would naturally have less resistance than almost anyone I know. The guy builds most of his shows from the control-room anyhow. He went to work, roughed out a script, grabbed up a handful of actors, and went into rehearsal.

His dramatization was actually on the air when news came over the teletype that the escaped convicts had been recaptured. Working a typewriter with one hand and throwing cues with the other, Bill rewrote the last pages of his script to include a dramatization of the actual recapture, so that his listeners heard it played out on their radios before the newspapers were on the streets.

The script which is printed here is a repeat performance, with some inevitable polishing, of his impromptu broadcast——a feat which so far as I know remains almost unique in radio.

But after all, Bill is quite a genius, which is why we naturally had him directing the last Saint *series on the air.*

LC

THE SAN QUENTIN PRISON BREAK

by

WILLIAM ROBSON

The Characters

KRISTY	*a murderer*
MC KAY	*a robber*
LANDERS	*a killer*
STRAIGHT	*the master mind*
STEVENS	*a gun runner*
SYKES, *ATHERTON*, *NOON*, *COXE*	*the prison board*
HOLOHAN	*the warden*
BAGSHAW	*a dead shot*

Music—an exciting theme, ending on a series of sharp minor chords.

ANNOUNCER: Calling all cars——attention all cars——attention all Marin County Sheriff's cars——Broadcast Sixty-one. Four convicts just escaped from San Quentin Prison in State car——license number Diamond E——six——one——five——four. The convicts are reported headed north. All cars are warned to use discretion and hold fire if possible as the escaped convicts have kidnapped four members of the prison board and are carrying them as hostages. Stand by for further orders.

We hear the sound of motors starting and driving off at great speed, and the whine of many sirens.

The orchestra interrupts the noise of the police cars with an ominous strain of music. It lasts a short time and fades out.

NARRATOR: The convicts who have just escaped from San Quentin Prison are Kristy, McKay, Landers, and Straight. Let's take out a few moments to see what brought them there in the first place. In four brief flashbacks——these are the men who escaped, and this is what they did . . .

The voice of the Narrator trails off, and we hear the motor of a speeding car. Two thugs, Kristy and Eddie, are robbing a

doctor whose car they have stolen and whom they have taken along.

DOCTOR: Look here boys, can't you listen to reason? You've got my watch, my money, and my car. What else do you want.

KRISTY: You ain't got enough dough on you.

DOCTOR: I can't help that. I've given you everything. Won't you let me out?

EDDIE: Sure thing. And here's a little souvenir to remember us by.

Thud of fist. The doctor grunts.

KRISTY: Open the door, Eddie. Red light him.

The car door opens.

EDDIE: Go on——scram, guy——there——

The sound of his fist again, and the door closes with a bang.

KRISTY: Gee, I never knew a guy would bounce like that when he hit the road.

A chord of music disperses the sound of the motor, and dies.

NARRATOR: Such was the crime that in 1931 sent Joe Kristy, graduate of six prison terms in the Middle West, to San Quentin Penitentiary for from one to twenty-five years.

The music swells, strikes a new key as the scene changes, and stops abruptly.

We are in a courtroom, in which the case of Alexander McKay is being tried. The gavel raps for silence.

JUDGE: Will the defendant take the stand?

McKAY: You see, Judge, it was this way. I pulled these jobs, but I wasn't alone. The coppers think they ain't got nothin' on Lillian but she's hot, Judge. She spotted the joints for me. If you sent me up, you oughta send her up too.

JUDGE: You get this girl into trouble like this, and then you try to save your skin by turning State's evidence against her. Well, it isn't going to help.

A brief chord of music, and the scene fades.

NARRATOR: Alexander McKay entered San Quentin in the summer of 1931 to serve from five years to life for robbery.

The orchestra plays a strong theme which ends abruptly.

We are in a drugstore where a robbery is taking place.

LANDERS: All right, you mugs, back up against the soda fountain and don't pull any funny stuff. Clean that cash register, Ben.
BEN: Okay.
LANDERS: Where you goin', sailor?
SAILOR: Nowhere. I was just turnin' around.
LANDERS: Well, stay put. . . . I said stay put.

A revolver shot.

BEN: You plugged him, Fred.
LANDERS: I meant to. Come on——scram!

Very short transitional music from the orchestra.

NARRATOR: For robbery, grand larceny, and assault with intent to commit murder, Fred Landers was sent to San Quentin three years ago to serve two terms of from five years to life.

Music——an extended theme in a minor key.

The scene that follows takes place between Greening, an official of the law, and Straight, a professional robber who has already served a number of sentences.

GREENING: Now look here, Straight, I know you held up that bank and I'm going to send you up. You might as well make my job easier by confessing.
STRAIGHT: What'll you do for me?
GREENING: You can't make a deal. You robbed the bank and you'll do time.
STRAIGHT: Okay, I pulled that job. But I bet I'll be out before they make you Chief for getting this confession.

The music plays again to indicate a change of scene.

NARRATOR: Rudolph Straight, confessed bank robber and veteran jail bird, tried twice to make good his boast. He was thrown into solitary. Returned once more to his cell, he strikes up an acquaintance with Clyde Stevens, another bank robber, in the prison yard.
STEVENS: You look like a tough guy to me, Straight.
STRAIGHT: I am.
STEVENS: You want to get outa this joint, eh?
STRAIGHT: Don't you?
STEVENS: Sure. I'm gettin' out, too. I got drag. The parole board'll hand me my walking papers next time it meets. They gave me a five to life rap——

STRAIGHT: And you're gettin' out after three years?
STEVENS: Sure. Parole's a cinch in this state.
STRAIGHT: Well, I ain't gonna wait for no parole.
STEVENS: That's the way I figured you——and I gotta plan. As soon as I get out I'll fix it so's I get some gats in to you.
STRAIGHT: That's all I need. Gimme a good gat and I'll walk right outa here.
STEVENS: Okay, I'll get you the gats. You get a couple more guys you can depend on. We join up as soon as you make the break, and by that time I'll have some joints cased.
STRAIGHT: That's okay with me.
STEVENS: All right. Now stop this monkeying around with files and bent wrenches. Stay out of solitary and you'll be at the business end of a forty-five in no time.

A strain of music, somewhat harsh.

NARRATOR: On October 31st last year, Stevens was paroled, and within two months was wanted by San Francisco authorities for bank robbery. Although the police are unable to find the man he managed to keep in contact with his prison pal, Rudolph Straight. One day, a fortnight ago, in the prison carpenter shop——

We hear the hammering of nails, and the whine of a buzz saw.

STRAIGHT: Hey, Alec. There's that prison truck again.
McKAY: What about it?
STRAIGHT: That's the truck that goes in and out of the walls. Stevens hid the gats in it. They're under the dash. They been there for two weeks and I ain't had a chance to get them out.
McKAY: That driver's liable to find them.
STRAIGHT: That's what I'm afraid of. Now listen——watch that guy, and if you get a chance glaum those rods and hide 'em.
McKAY: Where?
STRAIGHT: That keg of nails'll be okay. Look——there goes the driver now——
McKAY: Okay.

A pause.

STRAIGHT: Get 'em okay?
McKAY: Sure.
STRAIGHT: Stash 'em in that keg.

There's the sound of the tinkle of nails as he hides the guns in the nail-keg.

STRAIGHT: That's fine.
McKAY: Hey, there's just you and Joe Kristy and me in this deal ain't there?
STRAIGHT: That's right.
McKAY: Well, Steve sent us four gats.
STRAIGHT: Yeah? Well, in that case we better make it a quartet. How about Landers over there?
McKAY: Yeah, he's okay. He can take it.
STRAIGHT: I'll talk to him. Hey, Fred.
LANDERS: Yeah, Rudy.
STRAIGHT: Come here. Act like you was workin'——we want to ask you something.
LANDERS: Yeah, what is it?
McKAY: Look here, Landers——if you had a forty-five in your hands would you take it on the lam outa this joint?
LANDERS: What are you doin', tryin' to kid me?
STRAIGHT: No, we're on the level.
GUARD: Hey, you birds——separate——and get back to work. What you think this is, a tea party?
STRAIGHT: I'll tell you about it later, Fred. Beat it.

A swirl of discordant music.

NARRATOR: Early last Wednesday morning, as the inmates of the prison filed into the washroom, Straight signals to Kristy, Landers, and McKay. Cautiously they move over toward him.
LANDERS: What's up, Rudy?
STRAIGHT: Would you be willing to blaze outa here with a forty-five?
LANDERS: Try me.
STRAIGHT: Well, today's the day.
LANDERS: What makes you set on today?
LANDERS: I thought you was foolin'.
STRAIGHT: I'm on the level. How about you boys?
KRISTY: I'm all set.
McKAY: Ready any time you are, Rudy.
STRAIGHT: The prison board's meeting with the Warden this morning. None of these flat-footed guards want any trouble while the big shots are here.
KRISTY: Maybe they'll get some whether they want it or not, eh Rudy?
McKAY: You know——now that we get so close to it——I been kinda thinkin' . . . suppose it don't work, suppose we get plugged or something.
STRAIGHT: You ain't yellow, are you, McKay?
McKAY: No, of course I ain't yellow.
KRISTY: You better not be. You're in this too deep now to back out.
McKAY: Who wants to back out? I was just thinkin'——

STRAIGHT: Stow it. This ain't a chin fest. We get to work fast.
LANDERS: What do we do for gats?
McKAY: That's all taken care of. You ain't got nothing to do but come along and do what you're told.
STRAIGHT: We got some forty-five's stashed away.
LANDERS: That's swell.

Somebody passes, whistling. The men are quiet. Gradually the whistling fades out of earshot.

KRISTY: Who's that?
STRAIGHT: One of the cons. A fresh fish I think. I don't know him.
McKAY: Do you think he heard anything?
STRAIGHT: No——he wouldn't be making a noise if he was spying on us.
McKAY: You never can tell about stools.
STRAIGHT: Now look. The board's meeting in the Warden's office, see——
LANDERS: Yeah. So what?
STRAIGHT: I been tipped off that they all go over to the Warden's house for lunch, see? Now get this——we drive up in the old Ford like we were doin' our work, but all the time we got the forty-fives in our belts, see?
LANDERS: Yeah. Then what?
STRAIGHT: So we go in——and we snatch the Warden and the prison board.
KRISTY: What?
LANDERS: You're nuts.
STRAIGHT: No I ain't. We snatch the Warden and the prison board. They'll come in handy. Cops won't shoot so fast when they know we've got big shots in tow.
LANDERS: Holy mackerel——the Warden and the prison board!
STRAIGHT: They been handing out and turning down paroles all morning. Maybe they'd like to see how it feels to be the guy on the carpet——and for once we'll be the big shots. Kind of a funny idea, don't you think?
KRISTY: It's okay if it works, Rudy.

Music rises to mark the end of the scene.

NARRATOR: A few minutes before noon Joseph Stephens, Frank Sykes, Warren Atherton, Charles Coxe, and Mark Noon, members of the state prison board, take a recess from their morning meeting and join Warden Holohan at luncheon at his home within the prison walls. The pleasant sun-filled room gives no indication of the impending danger that lies just outside those curtained French windows where eight hard eyes are watching every movement.

The scene is as described by the Narrator, in the dining room of Warden Holohan's home. The tinkle of dishes can be heard behind their conversation.

SYKES: Well, Warden, you are to be congratulated on the splendid work you are doing, especially in view of your limitations here.

WARDEN: Thank you, Mr Sykes.

They hear the doorknob rattle.

WARDEN: Pardon me. There seems to be somebody at the door.

STRAIGHT: Stick 'em up, gentlemen.

WARDEN: Well, what is the——

STRAIGHT: We mean business, Warden. Up with 'em.

WARDEN: Look here——you can't come in here like this——

STRAIGHT: Oh yeah? I been wantin' to do this for a long time, Warden.

He hits the Warden over the head with his gun butt. The Warden grunts and falls.

STRAIGHT: I don't like that guy.

LANDERS: We didn't come here to bump the Warden off.

SYKES: Just what did you come for?

STRAIGHT: We're going to get out of this place, and we're going to take you with us.

SYKES: Do you realize there's a law against kidnapping in California? You can be executed for this.

STRAIGHT: Yeah? Well, we're the law and if there's any executing to be done, we'll do it.

ATHERTON: Look here, if you boys are on the square and promise there won't be any shooting, I'll go with you as a hostage. But please remember I'm the father of four children.

STRAIGHT: I guess we'd better take all of you. Now you guys take off your clothes. We're going to need 'em. Come on, let's have your coats and vests——you can wear our uniforms . . . Come on, fork over. All except you——you're too fat——none of us could wear your coat.

NOON: That's a consolation.

STRAIGHT: But you can do something else for us. You can call the prison gate and tell them to send the Warden's car over and that we're coming through and to have the gate open.

NOON: But——but——

STRAIGHT: Go on——there's the phone.

Noon picks up the receiver.

NOON: Let me have the west gate, please. . . . Hello, this is Mark Noon speaking. Send the Warden's car over to the house.

STRAIGHT: Tell him you're all coming through.
NOON: And the whole board will be coming out in a minute, so have the gate open, please.

The phone clicks as he hangs up.

KRISTY: Come on, Rudy, let's get going.
STRAIGHT: Don't get excited, Joe. Okay, gentlemen, out through the side door here. I see the car coming.

Straight opens the door and they all shuffle out. The Warden's car has just driven up. We hear the motor idling.

McKAY: Drop those rifles.
DRIVER: Why, what the devil——
McKAY: Drop 'em or we shoot these men.

Rifles drop on the gravel. The car door is opened.

STRAIGHT: Okay, gentlemen, pile in the back. You there——stay at the wheel. And this other guard——you stand on the running board. Okay, boys, let's go.

The motor speeds up, the siren whistles; they drive straight through the west gate. As the sound of the siren dies out there is a short pause. And then——

ANNOUNCER: San Francisco Police calling all cars——attention all cars. Watch for Studebaker Sedan, license Diamond E—6145——four convicts escaped from San Quentin prison in this car.

The noise of sirens as police cars all over San Francisco answer the call.

SECOND ANNOUNCER: Calling all cars——Oakland police calling all cars . . . Special emergency broadcast . . . four convicts escaped . . .

Sirens.

THIRD ANNOUNCER: Berkeley Police emergency call——all cars attention——all cars attention. A prison break at . . .

Sirens.

Music swells to a strong climax and ends sharply.

NARRATOR: Officers from San Francisco, from Oakland . . . from Marin County . . . close in on the territory surrounding San Quentin Penitentiary. Possess are hastily organized.

A brief chord of music.

NARRATOR: A few miles out of San Rafael, the convict car turns right heading for the Black Point cut-off. As they come in sight of the cut-off the drawbridge swings open with exasperating slowness. They pull up with a burning screech of brakes.

McKAY: Nothing to do but go back, Rudy.

STRAIGHT: You're tellin' me.

We hear the car turning around and then speeding again in the opposite direction.

STRAIGHT: Now we gotta go back into all the cops in the world.

ATHERTON: If you don't mind——

LANDERS: Shut up, you.

ATHERTON: I want to ask a question.

STRAIGHT: Let him talk. It'll make him feel good. Ain't you never heard of an emotional catharsis?

KRISTY: What's that——some kind of snow?

STRAIGHT: What's on your mind, Toots?

ATHERTON: What I want to know is——how in the world did you get those guns?

STRAIGHT: (*Laughing*) That's a professional secret——and what you don't know won't hurt you.

KRISTY: Rudy——look. Cops ahead.

STRAIGHT: Get your gats out. Step on that siren, mug, and drive like hell.

The siren whines shrilly.

STRAIGHT: Just as I figured——they're afraid to shoot on account of our passengers. You boys are a great help to us. Now look here, driver——what's your name by the way?

DRIVER: Jones.

STRAIGHT: Oh, one of the Jones boys, huh? Well, listen, Jonesy. Just pull up a minute——I'm going to let our fat friend here out.

NOONAN: What?

STRAIGHT: Yeah. You're gonna get out and you're gonna tell that posse back there to call off their dogs——or we'll bump off your pals here. Give us a half hour and everything'll be okay. Pull up, Jonesy.

The motor slows down to idle. Car door opens.

STRAIGHT: Okay, get out. And don't forget that message.

Door slams.

STRAIGHT: Get goin', Jonesy.

The motor roars away.

A few sharp chords of music.

NARRATOR: Mark Moon, secretary of the prison board, immediately phones the prison of his whereabouts. With orders to hold fire as long as possible the army of the law goes into action. From San Francisco, from Oakland, from Berkeley, come officers. Quickly the peace forces are organized, and police radio blaring last minute flashes . . . a posse composed of hundreds of men in scores of police cars block every highway and byway in Petaluma and Marin Counties. As the convicts' car swoops into the Hicks Valley Road the posse sights them. The chase is on. Deputy sheriffs pull down their shot guns from the roofs of their high-powered police cars. State patrolmen crouch over their white motorcycles, unlimber their guns. Sirens scream. Ten miles——twelve miles——fourteen miles——they roar west to Petaluma. The convicts, still out of range, apprehensively look backwards. Then, when they are eighteen miles away from Petaluma, the convicts' car takes a turn too sharply . . . the car skids . . . the law is within range . . .

There is a fusillade of gunfire and a roar from the motor.

STRAIGHT: Duck low, you guys. Hey, Jonesy, keep the car on the road.

DRIVER: Can't help it. They shot off the rear tire.

Sykes groans.

STRAIGHT: What's the matter with you?

SYKES: They got me——in the leg——

STRAIGHT: Try to pick off that guy on the motorcycle, Joe. Come on, Jonesy, more speed.

DRIVER: I can't go faster than fifty with that rear tire off.

STRAIGHT: Well I can——get out.

DRIVER: Don't throw me out for God's sake!

STRAIGHT: Get out.

The car door opens.

STRAIGHT: Push him out, Alec. I'll drive the damn thing.

The motor accelerates.

McKAY: It's no use, Rudy——they're gaining on us.

KRISTY: There's some building up ahead. Let's fight it out there.

STRAIGHT: Okay——we'll slow down and you guys jump.

As the motor slows down, police sirens can be heard from a distance coming nearer and growing louder.

STRAIGHT: Come on——jump!

There is a terrific noise as the empty car crashes.

STRAIGHT: Beat it into these buildings.
ATHERTON: Are you all right, Frank?
SYKES: I think so.
SHERIFF: I'll kill you, you dirty——
SYKES: Don't for the love of God, Sheriff——that's Atherton. They made us change clothes.
BAGSHAW: Where are the men?
ATHERTON: They ran into that building.
BAGSHAW: Okay, men, surround the building——
SHERIFF: Look out, Bagshaw, he's behind you!

The sound of a shot.

BAGSHAW: I got him.

A fusillade of machine gun fire. It continues for a short time, and then——

KRISTY: Hold your fire——we surrender.
BAGSHAW: Then throw your guns out, and come out with your hands up in the air. Shake them down and slap the handcuffs on them, Sheriff.

We hear the handcuffs snap shut on their wrists.

McKAY: What'd you do——murder Rudy?
BAGSHAW: No. I got him before he got me. And now, unless there are any objections, suppose we return to San Quentin. There are some questions I'd like to ask you——some very pertinent questions.

A sweeping strain of music, clear and untroubled.

NARRATOR: Rudolph Straight, the convict leader, dies on the way to the hospital. James Stephens and Frank Sykes, not dangerously wounded, are taken to the Petaluma Hospital, and Warden Holohan lies in the prison hospital critically injured as District Attorney Albert E Bagshaw of Marin County begins his investigation of the prison break.

BAGSHAW: Boys, I'm not going to mince any words with you. Two California laws threaten all of you with the death penalty. One says that kidnapping is a capital crime, and the other says that any life termer involved in a prison disturbance in which bodily injury occurs is liable to be executed. The latter applies to at least two of you. Now we know this is an outside job. I want to know where those guns came from.

McKAY: Clyde tSevens sent them in to us.
KRISTY: Shut up, you rat.
BAGSHAW: Clyde Stevens, eh? Know him, Captain?
CAPTAIN: Sure I know him. He was paroled about three months ago, and we're looking for him for bank robbery. We had a trap set for him day before yesterday but he knocked over a bank right under our noses. I got a line on his hideaway and I was going up there this afternoon to knock him over when this thing happened.
BAGSHAW: Well, you've got a double reason for a visit now.
CAPTAIN: I should say I have, and I'll have that boy in the can before midnight, I promise you that.
McKAY: I wouldn't be too sure about that, you big flatfoot. That guy's a killer.

Brief musical interlude. It fades on a minor note.

NARRATOR: It is close to midnight. San Francisco is shrouded in deep fog. Captain Dullea at the head of a posse of fifteen men crosses the narrow strip of water between the mainland and Sherman Island in the delta of the Sacramento River. Cruising at half speed, the motor boat scarcely makes a sound. Quietly they shunt into a little pier, scramble on to land.
CAPTAIN: That's his shack. Lights are still on. Take it easy.

We hear their slow footsteps on the gravel.

CAPTAIN: Surround the place, boys, and have your guns ready. . . . All set?
DICK: Set.
CAPTAIN: Let's go then.

They open the door.

CAPTAIN: Stick 'em up, Stevens.
STEVENS: What the devil——what's all this about?
CAPTAIN: Stick 'em up I said——and your pal too.
STEVENS: What do you want us for?
CAPTAIN: Running guns into San Quentin——and a couple of bank robberies.
STEVENS: I don't know nothing about running guns——or bank robberies either.
CAPTAIN: No? Well, we'll talk about that later. Slap the bracelets on him, Tom.

We hear the click of handcuffs.

Music——a few dramatic chords.

NARRATOR: The officers return across the black waters of East Bay with their two captives, Clyde Stevens and Albert Kessell. They leave their boat at Antioch and walk through the deserted streets of the little town to their waiting police cars. Suddenly——

CAPTAIN: Look out, boys——Stevens got away. Halt! Stop or I'll fire.

He fires several shots.

DICK: That patrolman caught him down at the corner.

The Captain runs down to the corner. His footsteps resound on the empty pavement.

CAPTAIN: I'm going to fix that guy . . . What's the big idea, mug?

STEVENS: You dicks aren't gonna take me in. You can bump me off first.

CAPTAIN: Well, I don't think that'll be necessary. But if you don't come quietly, why——

He socks Stevens . . .

CAPTAIN: ——I guess we'll have to take you in this way. Come on, boys.

A burst of music.

THE SAINT

presents

THE MIRACLE TEAPARTY

by

Leslie Charteris

IT WILL *scarcely be a surprise to anyone that Charteris, who can do practically anything except touch his coccyx with his occiput, has also written radio scripts.*

It has already been revealed that at one time, under a phoney name, he added no less than thirty-nine hitherto unrecorded adventures to the saga of Sherlock Holmes.

Being an incorrigibly lazy man, he was delighted to let several different writers contribute to the various dramatizations of the Saint which have been put out over the air from time to time under the sponsorship of headache remedies and canned creams of spinach.

But the following adaptation is his very own; and while the original story will not be unfamiliar to adepts of the Immortal Works, the things Charteris does with it to squeeze it into 26 minutes of airtime should be of interest to all connoisseurs of condensation.

L C

THE MIRACLE TEAPARTY

by

LESLIE CHARTERIS

The Characters

SIMON TEMPLAR	*the SAINT*
PATRICIA HOLM	*his partner*
HOPPY	*his man Friday*
RYAN	*a dyspeptic cop*
JOE	*an optimistic cop*
CLERK, *MANAGER*	*drugstore employees*
DR YEE	*an Oriental*

ANNOUNCER: We find the Saint with the very beautiful Patricia Holm and the very hideous Hoppy Uniatz in San Francisco. They have just finished a stroll through Chinatown and are now sitting down in a small neighborhood bar for a little rest and refreshment.

In the background, there is the tinkle of ice in glasses, the sound of cocktail shakers, and the other usual noises to be heard in bars. The radio is playing a newscast.

BARTENDER: Well, folks, what's it going to be?

PAT: Dry Martini.

SAINT: Double dry Martini.

HOPPY: Triple boibon.

PAT: If I'd known we were going to do all this hiking I'd have worn low-heeled shoes.

HOPPY: I always wear 'em.

SAINT: Hold it a minute, kids ——I want to listen to that radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER:—Radio Tokio reports the damage was slight, but pilots reported that the Kamakazi aircraft plant at Okazaki appeared to have been burned out by the Superforts . . . On the home front, another incident in the outbreak of sabotage which has been spreading through war plants on the Pacific Coast in the last few months occurred this afternoon, when a mysterious fire started in the paint store at the Mare Island repair docks. The fire was quickly extinguished but the damage will cause several days' delay in urgent naval repairs.

This is the seventh incident of sabotage affecting vital war industries

since the disastrous explosion at the marine storage depot last April . . . (*Announcer continues*)

PAT: I didn't think that would be going on any more. Sabotage——enemy agents——all that sort of thing.

SAINT: Darling, some people never know when to stop, and other people will do any kind of work for money.

By now the radio announcer has finished with the news and goes into the commercial.

RADIO ANNOUNCER: (*With a change of voice*) And now——the Miracle Tea Program——a quarter hour of your favorite dance music.

The radio plays dance music.

BARTENDER: Well, how's the poison, folks?

SAINT: Oh——I'd forgotten about that. (*He tastes his drink*) Mmm——good enough!

HOPPY: Yeah. I'll have anudder.

BARTENDER: Another triple?

HOPPY: Naw——just a double. I'm taperin' off.

PAT: I don't like this great silence, Simon.

SAINT: Why, was I being silent?

PAT: You know you were.

SAINT: Just thinking.

PAT: Too much——such men are dangerous.

SAINT: (*Laughs*) Have I spoken to you lately about the stars in your eyes?

PAT: Not for the last hour.

SAINT: Do they dazzle you? I mean, can you still see traffic lights and that sort of thing?

PAT: (*Serious*) Simon——we came here on a vacation, didn't we?

SAINT: We certainly did.

PAT: And you aren't thinking of trying to do the FBI's work and meddle with this sabotage business?

SAINT: On my word of honor. I shall simply ignore it. I'm going to be the most virtuous character you ever met.

RYAN: (*Approaching their table*) (*Tough, nasty*) You can say that again, Templar.

SAINT: (*Take*) Oh, can I? Well thanks.

RYAN: Your name's Templar, isn't it?

SAINT: Yes. But I don't think I know you.

RYAN: I know you——you're the Saint.

SAINT: Could be.

HOPPY: Boss, who does dis mug tink he is?

RYAN: This is what I think I am.

He shows them his police badge.

HOPPY: (*After a pause*) Oh. A cop.

SAINT: Well, well, well. Very handsome badges you have here. Won't you join us, Inspector?

RYAN: Lieutenant. Lieutenant Ryan. And I won't join you. And I don't want any of your fast answers. I've heard all I want to hear about you, and I . . . Oh! (*He groans*)

PAT: (*Startled*) Simon——what's the matter with him?

RYAN: (*Recovering*) It's just my stomach. Sometimes I get the most awful indigestion.

HOPPY: And with all dat stomach to have indigestion in.

RYAN: (*Bellowing again*) Never mind my stomach! I just came over to tell you one thing, Mr Saint. We don't want you around this town. So if you know what's good for you, you'll take the next train out ——you, and this trained baboon of yours. Maybe you've got away with murder in other places, but you aren't going to do it here, see?

SAINT: I see.

On the radio, the music stops and we hear the voice of the commercial announcer.

ANNOUNCER: Is you dinner chummy with your tummy? If not, try Miracle Tea. This amazing tea is guaranteed not only to relieve indigestion immediately, but to effect a complete and permanent cure. Every day we are receiving new testimonials. Mrs Iris Riley writes tonight that once she tried Miracle Tea all traces of indigestion disappeared forever. Miracle Tea is made of the finest Chinese herbs discovered by the famous Chinese physician, Doctor Sam Yee. Miracle Tea may be purchased from all leading drug stores . . . or . . . you may purchase Miracle Tea direct from the New Asia Pharmacy on Grant Street in the heart of Chinatown. As our theme song says——

RYAN: What's that?

SAINT: Calm yourself, Lieutenant, it's just a radio commercial. You've heard them before, haven't you?

RYAN: Miracle Tea . . . As if tea could cure indigestion.

SAINT: You never know——maybe this stuff would do you some good. You ought to try it.

The radio plays "Tea for Two".

RYAN: (*Yelling*) Turn that thing off!

Somebody cuts off the radio, and the music stops.

SAINT: You see——that stomach just ruins his disposition.
PAT: If it wasn't for that he'd probably be as sweet as pie.
RYAN: (*Explodes*) Listen you two——
SAINT: Calm yourself, Lieutenant. You look bad——really you do.
PAT: Seems to be twitching a little, doesn't he, darling?
SAINT: It's not that so much, Pat, as his color. Acid . . . that's generally the start of the trouble . .. too much acid. In next to no time you're a walking mass of gastric ulcers. You know what happens when a gastric ulcer starts to . . .
RYAN: That's enough of that! I've given you the only warning you're going to get. I'm giving you twenty-four hours to get out of town.

A light strain of music plays briefly and fades to indicate a change of scene.

Lieutenant Ryan and Joe, a member of the Police Force, are walking along the street. We hear their heavy footsteps, and in the background the sounds of passing cars and automobile horns.

JOE: All the same, Lieutenant, if the Saint does leave town, I'll be surprised.
RYAN: If he doesn't leave town, he'll be sorry. If only I——

(*He groans*)

JOE: What is it?
RYAN: My stomach, Joe. I been having the heck of a time with it.
JOE: An uncle of mine had that once. He said it——
RYAN: Every time I eat a good meal, I get this a few hours after.
JOE: My uncle couldn't hardly eat anything. It just doubled him up. My aunt said——
RYAN: If only I didn't feel like this I'd probably have taken a poke at the Saint tonight.
JOE: Here's my car. Let me drive you home. Maybe you'd like to hear about my uncle.
RYAN: No thanks, I'd rather walk. It's just a few blocks.

Joe gets into the car.

JOE: Say——you oughta go in there.
RYAN: Where?
JOE: That drugstore across the street. The New Asia Pharmacy——that's where they sell that Miracle Tea that's always on the air with testimonials. Maybe you oughta try it.
RYAN: Nothing does me any good.
JOE: Well, take it easy, Lieutenant.

He starts the car engine going . . .

RYAN: Goodnight, Joe.

. . . and drives off.

There is a pause. Then we hear slow footsteps crossing the street; Ryan has decided to try the New Asia Pharmacy for some Miracle Tea. As he steps inside, the sounds of the street fade out.

CLERK: (*Coming up to him*) Yes sir. Can I help you?
RYAN: Gimme a package of that——that Miracle Tea.
CLERK: Yes sir. Er——what name, sir?
RYAN: (*Puzzled*) Ryan.
CLERK: Yes sir . . . Here you are. And——er——how about the rest of the order?
RYAN: (*Angry*) What d'you mean, the rest of the order? Here's your money. Gimmie that tea!

He throws a coin on the counter and walks out.

CLERK: (*Agitated*) Hey——wait a minute!

The door slams.

Music——a lively theme. It fades into the purr of a motor . . .

Pat, Hoppy, and the Saint are driving along the street not far from the New Asia Pharmacy.

HOPPY: Boss, I still don't like dat Lieutenant.
SAINT: He's not exactly the type who wins friends, but he probably influences people.
HOPPY: I'd like to meet him up a dark alley like dis some night.
SAINT: (*Laughs*) Maybe you will——any minute. Look up there——in the next block.
PAT: Where?
SAINT: Just passing under the street lamp.
PAT: So it is . . . Simon, did you——
SAINT: No, I did not follow him. Just a happy coincidence.
HOPPY: Gee, boss——we could ride up on de sidewalk and nudge him a little wit de front bumper and no one would ever know.
SAINT: I'm afraid there's one witness. See him?
PAT: Yes . . . Simon, it looks as if he was following the Lieutenant!
SAINT: It does, too . . . Hey, look what's happening!

We hear a yell from Lieutenant Ryan.

HOPPY: De guy slugs him!
SAINT: Pull up, Hoppy.

The car comes to a quick stop. They get out.

SAINT: (*Calling*) Hey——you!

There's the sound of footsteps running off.

HOPPY: He's gettin' away, boss. Do I drop 'im?
SAINT: No, Hoppy——he may have had his reasons. Let's see what sort of a job he did.
HOPPY: He conks de Lieutenant from behind wit a sap.
SAINT: Doesn't seem to have cracked anything——but it might have been different if we hadn't happened along.

Ryan groans.

RYAN: What happened?
SAINT: I'm surprised at you, Lieutenant——rolling in the gutter at your age. You must have had quite a celebration.
RYAN: The Saint! Why, you——you slugged me!
SAINT: Oh, don't be ridiculous. If we'd done it, do you think we'd still be around here holding your hand?
RYAN: (*Grudgingly*) Who was it? Did you see him?
SAINT: Not well enough to identify him . . . Do you think you can stand up now?
RYAN: Yeah . . . Ooooh, my head!
SAINT: Get in the car now and we'll take you home.
RYAN: Okay. But don't kid yourself this'll do you any good! What I told you still goes——and goes double.

A strain of dissonant melody ends the scene. It continues briefly and dies out.

We are in the Saint's apartment. Only the Saint and Pat are there. The door opens and Hoppy comes in.

SAINT: Make me a drink, Pat darling, before Hoppy gets hold of the bottle. I need consolation.
PAT: So do I.

She pours out the drinks.

PAT: That'll teach you to play being a Good Samaritan.
SAINT: And then we drive him home, and he encourages me to drive through a red light and gets me a ticket. What a guy!
PAT: Here you are, Simon.
SAINT: Thank you, darling. Is that all the consolation you're offering?
PAT: (*Laughing*) What else do you want?

SAINT: Guess.

PAT: Oh——that——

He kisses her.

HOPPY: Say boss, lookit what I find in de car. Dat flatfoot musta left it.

SAINT: Well, well——a package of Miracle Tea! So he took my advice after all.

PAT: I'd like to return it to him with cyanide in it.

SAINT: I'm afraid that would be rather illegal . . . but you do give me an idea. If we open it very caerfully we *could* mix it with some other ingredients that would make him fairly unhappy——some senna pods maybe, and some epsom salts, and——Wheew! Does anybody else see what I see?

HOPPY: Gee, looka dat lettuce!

PAT: It's full of money!

SAINT: Hundred dollar bills——at least fifty of 'em.

PAT: I've got it, Simon! The Lieutenant is taking graft.

SAINT: I don't think so. I don't think the Lieutenant knew what was in that package. If he had, the first thing he would have done when he woke up would have been to see if he still had the dough. But he didn't——he didn't even feel in his pockets.

PAT: But he was knocked silly.

SAINT: Not that silly.

PAT: All right, you think of something.

SAINT: My guess is that he was handed this package by mistake.

HOPPY: In da drug store?

SAINT: Yes. It was meant for someone else and the fellow in the shop got it mixed up.

PAT: Um huh . . . and as soon as he left they discovered the mistake and went after him to get it back. That explains the lug who followed him and knocked him out.

SAINT: Yes. Then we came along and he had to lam——without getting his tea back. I'll bet whatever's happening to the guy who gave the Lieutenant that package shouldn't be happening to Tojo.

A few sharp chords of music.

The scene is the manager's office at the New Asia Pharmacy.

CLERK: But how was I to know, Mr Krueger? He came in at exactly the right time. I've never seen Riley before, and I thought that was the name he gave. Then he grabbed the package right out of my hand and rushed off.

MANAGER: (*German accent*) You incompetent fool! Excuses! You should have known who he was.

CLERK: I wouldn't know now if Braun hadn't come in just as he was

leaving and told me he was Lieutenant Ryan. I *did* run after him. I knocked him out and would have gotten the package, but some fellow jumped out of a car. He was twice my size——he'd have killed me.

MANAGER: That might have saved someone else the trouble.

CLERK: (*Scared*) What do you mean?

MANAGER: Dr Yee permits only one mistake.

A sharp chord of music trailing off into a light theme, and fading.

Pat and the Saint are just entering the New Asia Pharmacy.

SAINT: Ah, here we are, darling——where the miracle happened.

PAT: Funny drugstore for Chinatown——this is quite Occidental.

SAINT: This is just on the edge of Chinatown, my sweet. I imagine his trade is about fifty-fifty.

CLERK: (*Coming up to them*) Something I can do for you, Sir?

SAINT: Is the manager around?

CLERK: (*Hesitatingly*) Oh . . . well——what do you want to see him about?

SAINT: It's about this package of Miracle Tea. A friend of mine bought it here yesterday but he decided he wouldn't risk taking it and was going to throw it down the drain——but I said, "Ryan," I said, "why waste half a dollar? I'll bet they'll exchange it for a bar of soap or something."

CLERK: Why——why——yes——I'm quite sure we will. Let me have the package. I'll go ask the manager. Be back in just a minute.

SAINT: It worked, my sweet. It worked!

PAT: But Simon, you didn't give him back the money?

SAINT: Of course not, darling——just that other package you bought for me at the drugstore in the hotel, with a few substitutions of my own, of course.

PAT: (*Sighs*) That's a relief.

SAINT: You stay here and watch the store, darling. I'm going upstairs to see the fun.

The orchestra plays a piquant tune; the Saint is on his way upstairs . . .

Outside the manager's office he hears the conversation going on inside.

CLERK: But I'm telling you the truth, Mr Krueger. It's Riley's package.

A man just came in and said he wanted to exchange it——It hasn't been opened.

MANAGER: Hmmm . . . There's something funny about this.

He tears open the package.

MANAGER: Well, we'll see . . . Why——there's no money in this. Just pieces of paper . . . Gott im Himmel! Lock at this!
CLERK: Why it's a drawing of a man——with a halo around his head.
MANAGER: You fool! That's the signature of the *Saint!*
CLERK: But——I don't understand.
MANAGER: The Saint sent this . . . and if he knows about the money he'll——
SAINT: (*Coming into the room*) Not "sent", dear boy. I brought it along myself just for the pleasure of seeing your happy faces.
MANAGER: The Saint!
SAINT: How did you guess? You know, I thought we ought to get together on this tea business. I was mixing a few odds and ends together myself and——ah, ah——don't reach for your gun.
MANAGER: Get him, Johnnie.
SAINT: Oh well, if you want to play rough . . .

He socks the manager, who groans and falls to the floor.

SAINT: And you're number two, sonny boy.

He knocks out the clerk.

SAINT: Say, I'm in the Big League. Two hits, two runs——no errors.

Music——a succession of quick, exultant chords.

The Saint has returned to the store downstairs where Pat has been waiting.

SAINT: Sell any alarm clocks while I was gone, Pat darling?
PAT: No, nobody came in except that old gal over there by the counter.
SAINT: Well, I'd better get busy. I wouldn't want business to suffer on my account. Something for you, madam?
WOMAN: I want a dime's worth of cough drops. Johnny's cough is awful bad again.
SAINT: Oh, that's a shame. Here——take a dozen packages.
WOMAN: His cought ain't that bad.
SAINT: Ten cents is the price to you, Aunty, and here's a bottle of cough syrup and——
WOMAN: But I——
SAINT: And here——better give Johnny some castor oil. Here's a whole quart——on the house.

A chord of music.

MAN: (*Chinese*) I would like some razor blades, please.

SAINT: Yes sir, but wouldn't you rather have this electric razor?
MAN: Oh yes——but it cost too much money.
SAINT: Same price as razor blades today, Charlie. Here——just two bits . . . and oh yes——here's a carton of cigarettes. Compliments of the management.

A chord of music.

PAT: Simon, have you gone crazy?
SAINT: This is fun, precious. I think I'll open a drug store of my own.
PAT: It may be fun, but what good is it doing?
SAINT: Giving me time to frisk the joint. And I've found something already. Look at this, behind the counter.
PAT: Three packages of Miracle Tea.
SAINT: With names on them. Robinson——Schwartz——O'Brien——see? Not just regular packages like the stock up there on the shelves. Special ones——for special customers. And now while there's a lull in business I think we ought to open 'em.

They start tearing open the pacakges.

SAINT: More hundred dollar bills in this one.
PAT: Look what I've got here, in this package—pencils!
SAINT: And the same in this one. Curiouser and curiouser. Hmmm. Kind of thick and heavy pencils, aren't they?
PAT: Does it make any sense to you?
SAINT: It's beginning to. Put them in your bag, darling, for future examination. Now let's put three ordinary packages where we found these, with the same names on them, and get out of here before anything else happens. Only first——let's go back upstairs and see if there are any clues on our sleeping beauties.

The scene changes. They are upstairs in the manager's office where the manager and the clerk are still "out" on the floor.

PAT: Well, Simon, you did a good job of putting them to sleep. Who are you——the Japanese Sandman?
SAINT: If what I suspect is true, they'll wish I'd been a baka bomb. (*To the unconscious manager—with some effort*) Come on——roll over, Fatty. Papa wants to see what you've got in your pockets . . . Hmmm——wallet. Let's see. Well, what do you know——prescription blanks from Dr Sam Yee——address and everything. He lives up on Russian Hill. But all it prescribes are the magic names of Robinson, Schwartz, and O'Brien. How about you, sweetheart——find anything in the desk?
PAT: Just these papers. They look like radio commercials, advertising Miracle Tea.

SAINT: Well, bring them along and we'll look them over. I've got a hunch that Dr Yee has stumbled onto something that every sponsor would give his eye-teeth for——a commercial that works miracles.

Transitional music to mark the end of the scene. It finishes with a light playing of "Tea for two" which continues during part of the following conversation.

The scene is the Saint's apartment. Pat, Hoppy, and the Saint are there listening to the radio.

HOPPY: Dat's a pretty corny program if you ask me. Why don't you get a mystery program?

SAINT: The Miracle Tea program *is* a mystery program, Hoppy, and I want to find out why Dr Yee spikes his tea with hundred dollar bills and just who drinks all this filthy lucre.

The radio stops playing "Tea for Two", and we hear the voice of the commercial announcer.

ANNOUNCER: Is your dinner chummy with your tummy? If not——try Miracle Tea . . . This amazing tea is guaranteed not only to relieve indigestion immediately, but to effect a complete and permanent cure. Listen to these testimonials: Tonight, Mr Robinson of Palo Alto writes that Miracle Tea does everything we claim for it. Tonight Mr Schwartz of Berkeley tells how Miracle Tea has made a new man of him. And tonight, Mrs O'Brien of Oakland tells of her amazing cure by Miracle Tea. Don't forget that Miracle Tea can be purchased from all drug stores and direct from the New Asia Pharmacy on Grant Avenue in the heart of Chinatown . . . And now——

SAINT: Here it is, Hoppy. Listen!

SAINT: The magic names——Robinson, Schwartz, and O'Brien . . . Pat, I've got it! Turn off the radio, Hoppy.

HOPPY: Okay.

He turns the radio off.

SAINT: It's so simple——beautifully and gorgeously simple.

HOPPY: Yeah, ain't it. What's so simple?

SAINT: It's a code. Don't you see? The one thing I couldn't figure out was how Dr Yee's agents knew just when to visit the drug store. The names on those peculiar under-the-counter packets of Miracle Tea and the names we heard on the radio just now are the same. So what's the answer? The stage names of the operatives the boss wants to get in touch with are given out over the radio.

PAT: Through the testimonials!

SAINT: Exactly. No detective in the world could trace the connection between a radio program and the particular people who listen to it. And when the package contains the pay-off, like the one Lieutenant Ryan got——or the material for another job——

PAT: What material?

SAINT: Those pencils you found——and which I have duly examined. The very latest gadgets for sabotage. Inside them——a couple of chemicals, separated by a little glass capsule of acid. The acid eats its way through the capsule——everything runs together——and boom!

PAT: And you let me carry "boom" around in my handbag!

SAINT: Well, sweetheart, I was sure you'd be proof against any incendiary influences.

He picks up the phone and begins dialling.

PAT: Darling, you're wonderful. Don't you ever amaze yourself?

SAINT: Constantly.

PAT: Who are you calling now?

SAINT: A friend of ours——I want to invite him to a tea party.

At the other end of the wire, we hear the phone ringing and the receiver lifted.

RYAN: (*Over the phone*) Yeah?

SAINT: Lieutenant Ryan?

RYAN: Yeah.

SAINT: This is the Saint. Did you get your package of Miracle Tea all right? I sent Hoppy over with it.

RYAN: Yeah——I got it.

PAT: Oh Simon, the one you slugged with Epsom——?

SAINT: Ssshh . . . Feel any better yet?

RYAN: Now see here——if you just called me up to be funny——

SAINT: In spite of your offensive personality I am about to return good for evil and lay the catch of the season in your lap.

RYAN: What sort of a gag is this?

SAINT: No gag at all, pal. I'm just telling you how to put your hands on the entire personnel of the mob that's been making so much trouble lately.

RYAN: And how do I do that?

SAINT: All you do is turn out all the reserves and send them to the New Asia Pharmacy in Chinatown——the place where you bought that Miracle Tea.

RYAN: If I could just get hold of the man who makes that Miracle

Tea . . . Now look here——if you think you can take me for a ride——

SAINT: I do——but this time I won't. This is a straight tip. Just pick up everybody who goes shopping for Miracle Tea tonight and hold them for questioning. You'll find some very interesting fish in your net. And as for the big shot——I'm going to get him for you personally.

Music——a sprightly theme.

Hoppy and the Saint are breaking into the second floor of Dr Yee's house. We hear Hoppy tinkering with a lock.

HOPPY: Dat does it, boss.

SAINT: Nice work, Hoppy.

They push the window open.

HOPPY: It's a long time since I done any second-story work.

SAINT: I wouldn't want you to get out of practice, and the ground floor looked rather too lit up. Turn on the flashlight and let's see where we landed.

Hoppy clicks on the flashlight.

SAINT: Mmm . . . must be Dr Yee's bedroom. Very tasteful, in an Oriental way. I've seen a lot of worse stuff in museums . . . And look there——on the bed! That's a Japanese kimono——

HOPPY: Japanese? Gee boss, how d'you know?

SAINT: I'll tell you later. Come on.

They open the door and go stealthily down the stairs.

SAINT: Quietly now. We don't want to spoil the surprise.

As they reach the bottom, they hear the voice of Dr Yee.

DR YEE: Hello. Is this the radio station? . . . Give me Mr Vernon, the announcer of the Miracle Tea program.

SAINT: (*Quietly*) That's him. Down this hall.

HOPPY: (*Hushed*) Somebody's wid him.

SAINT: No, I think he's talking to someone on the phone.

DR YEE: Hello. Vernon? This is Dr Yee. Here are the testimonials for the eleven o'clock program. Ready? . . .

SAINT: (*To Hoppy*) Get ready now. (*Loudly*) Banzai, Honorable Doctor!

DR YEE: Who are you?

SAINT: The Saint.

DR YEE: The Saint!

SAINT: Right, my dear Doctor. You must be getting rather tired of me. Ah, ah——don't hang up that phone, and don't speak until I tell you. This gun talks a lot faster than you.

DR YEE: What do you want?

SAINT: Just this. Get back on that phone and say exactly what I tell you.

DR YEE: (*After a long pause*) Hello . . . hello . . . Vernon?

SAINT: Tell him you're changing the copy completely.

DR YEE: I won't do it. You can't make me.

HOPPY: Shall I make him, boss?

SAINT: How about it, Doctor? Hoppy has his methods. They're just as effective as bamboo splinters under the finger nails . . . Well, Doctor?

DR YEE: (*After a pause*) Vernon, I'm changing the copy completely.

SAINT: Tell him to make it read like this. "There are many testimonials in our files and they *all* praise Miracle Tea."

DR YEE: Change the commercial to read: "There are many testimonials in our files and they *all* praise Miracle Tea."

SAINT: Stop reaching for the desk drawer, Doctor——you make me nervous. Now say: "All of you——everybody——why not buy Miracle Tea *tonight.*"

DR YEE: That's too much, Saint. I won't say it.

SAINT: Hoppy.

DR YEE: (*Fast*) No, no, do not touch me. I say it. (*Into phone*) All of you——everybody——why not buy Miracle Tea *tonight.*

SAINT: Now tell him that's all.

DR YEE: That's all, Vernon.

He hangs up.

DR YEE: Now perhaps you tell me what is the meaning of this?

SAINT: I rather suspect it means Hara Kiri for you, Honorable Doctor, only we'll let Uncle Sam hold the sword.

DR YEE: How did you find out I was Japanese?

SAINT: The flower arrangement in your bedroom for one thing——your kimo shoker kimono for another. I was pretty sure though when you couldn't pronounce the "L" in Miracle Tea. I'm afraid, my dear Doctor, your nice little sabotage organization is kaput.

DR YEE: You have no proof.

SAINT: I don't think that will be hard for the authorities to put together. And I think you'll have a lot of trouble explaining why the characters whose testimonials you put on the air have special packages of Miracle Tea set aside for them——packages containing explosive and incendiary pencils, and other packages containing the payment for dirty work well done.

DR YEE: Insufferable pig!

SAINT: Save that language for Lieutenant Ryan——he'll appreciate it. By the way, his men are already at your drug store, and after the eleven o'clock broadcast goes on the air I imagine there'll be a fine crop of dyspeptics rolling in to join him in his misery. I'm going to take you along myself as the star attraction.

Chords of triumphant music. They climb to a high note, which is sustained briefly before it fades.

We are in the bar of the first scene. Pat, Hoppy, the Saint, and Lieutenant Ryan are ordering drinks. We hear the usual background of bar sounds——ice tinkling in glasses, the noise of cocktail shakers, etc.

BARTENDER: Well folks, what'll it be?

PAT: A dry Martini.

SAINT: A double dry Martini.

HOPPY: A triple boibon.

RYAN: I'll have a single.

SAINT: Why, Lieutenant, isn't that rather reckless?

RYAN: Maybe. But you've no idea how much better I'm feeling.

SAINT: You ought to be after rounding up the whole gang. Well, it was nice of you to call and thank me for making you look like a great policeman.

RYAN: I guess you had it coming. Anyway it's out of my hands now, and the higher-ups are pretty well satisfied.

PAT: You see, darling——just a little success and his ulcers are all forgotten.

RYAN: I'm feeling much better. You know, that's the thing I can't understand about this case. Why did Dr Yee go in for sabotage when he could have made a fortune out of that Miracle Tea——legitimately?

SAINT: Lieutenant——you don't mean you're going to write a testimonial?

RYAN: (*Sheepishly*) It's pretty drastic stuff but it did the trick. Do you know, I haven't had a single attack of indigestion since I took that package you sent over? Why I even had roast pork for dinner last night.

Pat and the Saint laugh loud and long.

Music——a rollicking, teasing theme.

"HANDS ACROSS THE CORPSE"

Inspector Claud Eustace Teal of Scotland Yard never expected to shake hands with the Saint across a still-warm victim of the Saint's dead-eye marksmanship.

But that's in effect what happened in THE SAINT MEETS HIS MATCH. Simon Templar, that debonair daredevil is hired by Scotland Yard to break up "The Angels of Doom."

Heading that ominous group is beautiful Jill Trelawney. She, like all women, finds the Saint hateful and lovable, tender and deadly.

How the Saint wrought havoc among the minds of policemen and crooks, among the emotions of Jill and Mr. Teal, is told in:

THE SAINT MEETS HIS MATCH

By LESLIE CHARTERIS

•

25c on Your Nearest Newsstand, or Direct by Mail from . . .

THE SAINT

314 N. Robertson Boulevard Hollywood 36, California

(Cash or stamps only with mail orders, please!)

"BEAUTIFUL WITH HAIR"

That was the way Helene Brand impressed Jake Justus.

He met her through Holly Inglehart, who had a dream, and awoke to find all the clocks in the house stopped at 3 o'clock.

That wasn't all Holly found. There was Aunt Alexandria, frozen stiff, and stabbed three times.

Jake became a one-man campaign to prove Holly's screwy story was right, and he made a few discoveries.

One of them was Helene, a beautiful blonde with loads of money and brains.

To learn the startling ending, read:

8 FACES AT 3

by Craig Rice

•

25c on Your Nearest Newsstand, or Direct by Mail from . . .

THE SAINT

314 N. Robertson Boulevard Hollywood 36, California

(Cash or stamps only with mail orders, please!)

WATCH FOR THE SIGN OF
The saint
HE WILL BE BACK

These 4 saint mysteries

These 4 exciting adventures of the SAINT which originally cost $8

YOURS FOR ONLY $1.00

IF YOU ACT TODAY. ONLY A LIMITED QUANTITY AVAILABLE.

PLUS this sensational FREE BOOK. The novel ATOMIC BOMB by Malcolm Jameson is more fact than fiction. Here is what ATOMIC POWER can do. Don't miss this story of tomorrow's happenings today!

Plus This Book ...

FREE $1.00

MAIL this TODAY

SAINT ENTERPRISES, INC.
314 North Robertson Boulevard
Hollywood 36, California

I am enclosing $1.00 for this big buy:

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ ZONE____ STATE_____

DEAR READER:

It has been wisely said (by me, of course) that radio is a blind medium. It is completely one-dimensional, relying solely on the ears of the audience. It has music and sound effects and dialogue, but no facial expression can be seen and no movement can be more than suggested or described by narration.

Analyzing it on those terms, I was surprised to find the idea of this anthology encountering almost as much opposition as enthusiasm. There were actually people who could not imagine a radio show without sound.

Now to me there is no basic difference between reading a radio show and reading a book. The dialogue is quoted there, with suitable adverbs to describe how the words are said. Everything else, every movement and even every sound, has to be described in words and brought alive from words in the imagination of the reader.

This book offers no less than that. In this volume we have tried to preserve a few shows which you may have enjoyed on the air, and I hope you will find them no less worth preserving in this form.

LESLIE CHARTERIS